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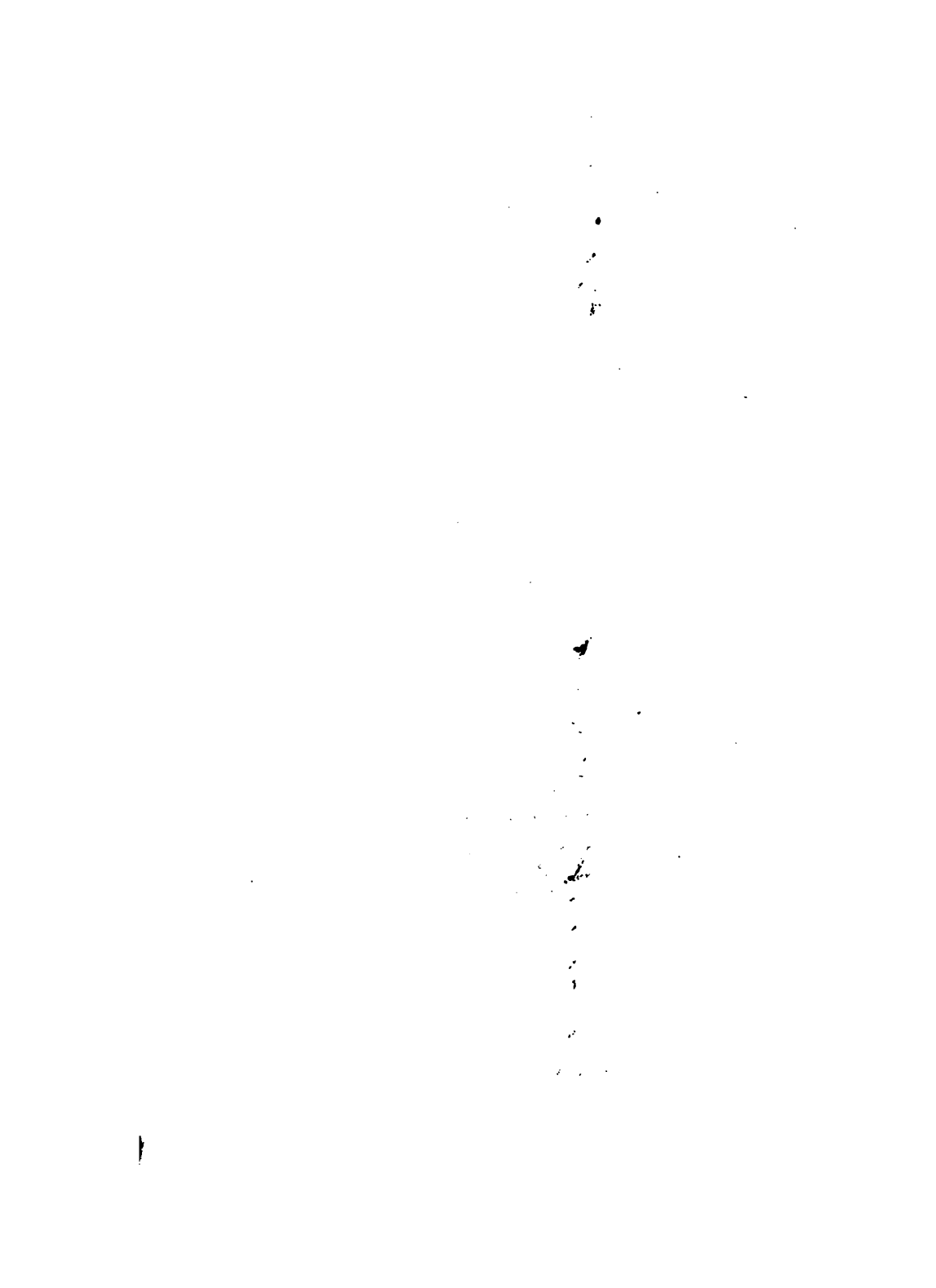




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THE
CURATE'S FRIEND.

A Story.

BY
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THE CURATE'S FRIEND.

CHAPTER I.

"WHEN you have done looking at yourself in the glass, perhaps you will go down and help Bridget to get tea," said Mrs. Llewellyn, the wife of the Curate of the church at Llansketty, to her youngest daughter.

The words sounded somewhat like a reproof; but the loving look of mingled admiration and anxiety softened into a smile, as the girl turned towards her.

"Yes, mother dear, I will go down directly," she answered in an absent tone; then, with her usual animation and another peep at the glass, she exclaimed, "Did you ever see such a lovely little hat, mother? It's a picture of itself, is it not? I know somebody that says it is the prettiest hat he ever saw."

"And what about the wearer?" said Mrs. Llewellyn.

"Ah! that must not be told even to the mother," answered Nelly, throwing back over her shoulders a shower of long glossy curls, that fell to her waist and were kept back from her forehead by a circular comb.

"I saw long John shambling up the village," she continued, "as I crossed the churchyard; his legs were, as usual, a great deal too far through his trousers, and his grey stockings and his shoes were a sight, mother. I do wish he would dress decently; for he is a good sort of body, as we used to say, and papa is so fond of him."

"It was not John Davies that admired your hat, then?" said Mrs. Llewellyn.

"John Davies! Now, mother dear, just fancy John Davies even knowing what a woman had on; why he would not know, if he were asked, if my hair is red or blue. Poor John!" And she laughed a merry, ringing laugh.

"You have been to 'The Place' then," said the mother. "Oh, Nelly! you know your father does not like you to go there so much now."

"What harm can there be, mother? I went to tell Lady Vaughan something she wanted to know about the Sunday-school, and the Captain saw me safe through the park. He said some of that new breed of short-horned cattle were grazing there, and it was not safe for me to go alone."

"You could have come round by the road, Nelly."

"Yes, and spoiled my new boots that I had so much trouble in getting the money for," she answered, holding up, for her mother to look at, a small, well-shaped foot, with a very neat but expensive Parisian boot on it.

"Ah! what with your boots and all your other costly

tastes, it is a very hard thing to make both ends of our income meet. You seem to forget, Nelly, how poor your father is."

"I hate poverty," said Nelly, putting her hat carefully away.

The mother continued—"While we are talking here, your father is waiting for his tea. You must help Bridget in the evening to fold the clothes. You know you ought not to have been away from home this afternoon."

"I can't bear washing days, and all the miseries of village life; I was not made for it," Nelly muttered.

"I am afraid some one has been putting wrong thoughts in your head. You are not like the same child that was sent to France four years ago. Your kind father went without all his little comforts to save up money enough to send you there, that your education might be the most finished we could give you."

"Dear old father!" said the girl; and her beauty was wonderful, as a soft look of love stole over her face. The long dark eyelashes almost touched her cheeks when they shaded for a moment her eyes,—eyes that told every thought. The colour of them was so undefined that people often differed about it; but in reality they were dark blue, except when she was under excitement, and then they seemed to take a tone from her feelings,—“a deeper dye.” In joy or sorrow, anger or love, they cast a fascination over those who dared look into their clear depths; for

truth and love were mirrored there, mixed with many, many faults and sins.

Nelly Llewellyn was the youngest daughter of the Curate of that name, and in her childhood gave rare promise of intellectual superiority. Her parents could not afford to give her the advantages they would have liked to do in England; education at good schools in England was so expensive. They were content with the best they could do at home, but made up their minds to part with their pet and play-fellow for some years, and send her to a French school. Their innocent, trusting, unsuspecting darling, with all her wealth of love and beauty, was to be sent away from their watchful care. Those boundless gifts of nature, what a treasure to all who know how to use them! But to the young soul, whose guiding principle is vanity and self-consciousness, such natural advantages become a fearful responsibility. Nelly went to the French school, and learned languages and music and dancing and the use of the globes, as well as the use of the milliner to a pretty woman; but not one word about that inner life, which should shed its light over all, even the most trivial every-day cares and duties. All that exuberance of feeling and fancy, which might with care and skill in their culture and development have made such a noble character, grew wild and tangled, mixing itself with weeds, beautiful to the eye but poisonous to the taste.

CHAPTER II.

"DEAR old father !" Nelly murmured again ; and as she was going out of the room she said, " He shall not have long to wait for his tea."

She ran down stairs. As she went, her clear ringing voice could be heard all over the small house, singing, while she busied herself, some words of Long-fellow which she had set to music :

"It comes, the beautiful the free,
The crown of all humanity,
In silence and alone,
To seek the elected one.

No one is so accursed by fate,
No one so utterly desolate,
But some heart, though unknown,
Responds unto his own.

Responds as if, with unseen wings,
An Angel touched its quivering strings,
And whispers in its song,
Where hast thou strayed so long ?"

The girl sang without effort, as she ran hither and thither about her domestic duties ; for her voice was flexible, melodious and clear. She seemed to overflow with music. The rich rollicking notes took up one song after another, and played with them in a way all her own.

Mrs. Llewellyn stood in the bedroom, as Nelly left her, for a few moments in thoughtful silence, partly

listening to the clear young voice, partly thinking sad thoughts mingled with fears and doubts, thoughts which she found it difficult to arrange in any order, and which came welling up from some undefined source of dread. She was a large, heavy woman, and, standing in that room, she seemed surrounded by things all too refined and slight for her use: the light iron bedstead, its French pole and snowy muslin curtains tied back with pink bows; the toilet and its dainty arrangements, all the washing apparatus of white china with a tiny line of gold. The paper on the walls had been chosen with equal care. It was white with a small green sprig, matching the carpet. Everything shewed how much the young girl was thought of in that home,—so lavish in all that regarded her, so scant in anything approaching luxury for the rest. The ceiling of Nelly's bedroom sloped, as did all the bedrooms in the cottage; but this room was light and airy, having a very broad though low lattice window, reaching nearly half way across the side of the room, and opening in three compartments. The roses and honeysuckles grew to the roof of the house, and peeped in and twined round the window in loving fashion. Mrs. Llewellyn stood for a few minutes, and then slowly went down to the sitting-room. The stairs creaked and seemed to whisper as the heavy feet descended, and no doubt would have made out a good story or two, if any one curious in the ways of mahogany or oak had thought fit to question the old Welsh stair-

case. The dark closet underneath must have been alive with little bits of bodies from the spirit-land, impatient to find an interpreter, if one might judge from the creakings and groanings and sly noises the boards made, if any one tried to go up them unobserved, after the master of the house had put out his bedroom candle. But as staircases must be much more tough things to turn than tables, I suppose the old boards may whisper their little bits of scandal to themselves for a long time to come.

When Mrs. Llewellyn entered the snug parlour, the preparations for tea were progressing rapidly. The snowy cloth, the home-made loaf, the rich cream, and even the pretty white china cups, gave promise of a pleasant meal. Nelly tripped into the room with a plate of toasted cakes in one hand, and some beautifully grown lettuces in the other.

"There! I ran down the garden for the lettuces, and rinsed them in the spring, because father is so fond of them," she said, as she seated herself at the table to make tea. "Will you ring, mother?"

Mrs. Llewellyn rang a small hand-bell, and it was answered by a door opening at one end of the room and two gentlemen coming in. They were Mr. Llewellyn and his friend John Davies.

CHAPTER III.

MR. LLEWELLYN, though shabbily dressed, did not want dignity. His black frock coat he wore in clerical fashion, open to shew a priest's waistcoat. What of his linen was seen was scrupulously white. His small, carefully-kept hands were delicate as a woman's, and his head was well put on his shoulders. Still, there was a want of power about the whole man. The mild, classically-cut features told more of the domestic affections than of intellectual strength. Yet it was by no means a face without mind, and could light up with brilliancy at the racy story or well-told anecdote. His friend John Davies was a very tall man, and dressed in black ; but he was evidently not a clergyman. Nature had intended to make a fine handsome fellow of him ; but his Welsh tailor had done his best to put that notion out of people's heads. His coat was too tight, and, as Nelly said, his long legs came too far through his trousers, shewing loose grey stockings and small feet put into large coarsely-made shoes. His head was massive, and the contour of his face almost coarse ; at least it would have been coarse except for the mouth and eyes ; but when John Davies smiled, you felt you must love and trust him. His large truthful eyes had an untold wealth of feeling in their deep shadows, though to the unobservant the spectacles which he always wore prevented their expression from being seen. His movements were sin-

gularly awkward and uncouth, and he seemed to blunder against everything, large and small.

I must apologize, I suppose, for keeping my readers standing so long by the tea-table while I introduce the two gentlemen; but I must tell my story my own way, or not at all. As they came into the room, Nelly said, in the coaxing voice of a petted child that feared no rebuke, "Look what beautiful lettuces! I picked them for you," glancing up at Mr. Llewellyn; then adding—"Come, sit by me, dearest father." The two last words were uttered in a low soft tone. Raising her voice, she said—"You here, John! Mother was asking for you this evening." At the sound of her voice, John Davies stumbled against a small work-table, and in righting himself trod on the foot of a large comfortable, dozy-looking cat, evidently on terms of great friendship with a sharp little terrier, of whom nothing was to be seen but bristles, a black dot for a nose, and two wicked-looking eyes. He made the most of the tumble, and added to John's confusion by the noisy demonstration he made in defence of poor puss.

"Sit down," said Nelly, slightly elevating her eyebrows.

"I hope I have not hurt your cat, Nelly," John said. "I did not see the table."

"You never do see anything," Nelly answered—a merry smile coming back to her face; "and yet your eyes are large enough, one would think, for all the common purposes of life."

He took a seat opposite her father and next to her with the familiarity of an old friend. He was not long put out of countenance by his blunders. Indeed, he never thought more about them a moment after he had committed them. His was a deeply thinking and earnest mind, full to overflowing of joy for the advancement that truth was making in the literature of the present time, and thankful for the light that was coming up on all sides to help the student to read aright the lessons of a higher life. Most of his spare money went to purchase new works as they came teeming from the press, rich with the best thoughts of the present great thinkers of our age.

Thus absorbed, the courtesies of life were often forgotten by him, and everything appeared trifling to him but his books—his books, and one other all-absorbing passion of his soul, and that was his love for Nelly. He loved her next to his God, as his all in this world or any other. And Nelly laughed at him, and liked him, and would have gone to him in any trouble or joy for sympathy or help, trusting him as she did her father; but she did not love him as Nelly thought she could love a husband. And so she played with the great earnest soul, and threw away from her a pearl of great price, for she had not yet learned its value.

CHAPTER IV.

TEA-TIME was a pleasant hour at the Curate's cottage, either in summer or winter; and Nelly made tea with a grace and ease that dispossessed one of the idea that it was a fatigue. There are demonstrative tea-makers, and dawdling tea-makers, and sloppy tea-makers, and fussy tea-makers. I have seen fussy people make tea in such a way that the getting of each cup was a painful attainment, and one had a feeling of greediness in the enjoyment of it—an enjoyment the tea-maker evidently could not possibly share in from the overwhelming work that engrossed her; but Nelly had nothing of this. There was the conscious dignity of a lady in her own house—the ease of perfect good-breeding in all she did. It might have appeared somewhat more than ease to the old-fashioned disciplinarians of the past generation; for she was quick to perceive, and to say what she thought; yet she could always make those around her feel that thus far she would go with them in outspoken opinion, but no further.

Mr. Llewellyn had sympathized largely with that class of educational theorists who would leave young people to form their own judgments of what is right in most of the positions in which they daily find themselves. There may be wisdom in their plan when tried upon young minds that have been always trained to the best use of their faculties; but it was sadly at

fault when the opening years of life had been, like Nelly's, spent at a large French school, one-half of whose members were from different parts of Germany, with a sprinkling of girls from Ireland and England. In the school Nelly went to they had no church service on the Sunday; and though the Protestants gathered in a private circle on that day to read their Bible, they read it as a task well over, or with pre-occupied minds—pre-occupied by the early associations of life. Thus the Calvinist and the Lutheran read it by the light reflected from the memories of home. The love of God to His children had always been the guiding star of Mr. Llewellyn's life, and Nelly took that one beautiful truth into her heart with unreasoning faith. She trusted it as an omnipotence. Her loves of earth and of heaven were closely mingled in her nature. She did not reason about the fact that she might love some fellow-mortal unwisely—love too well. The purity of her love she dreamed should ennoble everything which it could touch; and if another loved her truly, the truthfulness of that feeling would render him worthy of such love as hers. Nelly had read "Paradise Lost," and thought what a glorious triumph it would be for woman's love if that love could save some erring son of God, and stay his downward course, and bring him back to happiness. The fatal maxim, "Ask your own heart alone if it is right," prevented her going to her mother with every thought, and reposing in the confidence of that mother's love. She thought she could fathom the depths of her own

nature best ; its capacities for endurance ; its deep, deep love. She believed she perfectly understood the character of the one being she had singled out from all her world. At home they were prejudiced against him ; so Nelly thought. They regarded his rank too much, and thought more than was necessary of their own humble position. So she kept her secret for awhile, intending to tell them soon, when he gave his consent that she should do so.

CHAPTER V.

WAITING for his tea had not spoiled either the temper or the appetite of the kind-hearted Curate ; and after his pleasant meal he leaned back in luxurious ease, quiet and dreamy. His hand played unconsciously with one of Nelly's long rich curls, and his heart filled with devout thankfulness to the Giver of all his blessings.

"Well," said Nelly, "if you have finished tea, I will go and do some work for my mother, that I left unfinished in the afternoon."

As she went she stooped to kiss her father's brow and rest her hands for a moment lovingly on his shoulder. Then she went out, and took with her much of the spirit, light and beauty of the room. The cat and dog seemed to think so ; for they both followed her—the cat with mincing tread and fat, well-condi-

tioned dignity ; the little doggie with all his bristles on end. He always stepped on the tips of his toes, being in such an everlasting state of ire that he never could take the world and its ways easily, and seemed for ever on the look-out for the chance of annihilating some enemy.

Mr. Llewellyn and John Davies went back to the library—so called from its being the small room where the Curate kept his few books—his sanctum, in fact. There he could do as he liked, without interfering with Nelly's views of parlour matters. John did not stay long. He finished his gossip about the new books he had brought that afternoon for Mr. Llewellyn, and, passing through the parlour, sought, as he often had done before, for Nelly, to say good-night. She was in the kitchen, folding the white, sweet-smelling clean clothes fresh brought in from drying on the grass, and looked like some good fairy, with her elegant, dainty movements, come down to beautify earth's common work. Everything around her was exquisitely clean, and did Bridget a great deal of credit, from the smooth white board on which lay the folded clothes, to the pots and pans and nobs of the grate, which reflected back the sparkling firelight, and made one long to linger in that cosy, warm kitchen.

John stood at the door as he passed. "Good-night, Nelly," said he.

"Oh ! good-night—are you going ? Here, catch hold of the end of this table-cloth, and see if you can help me," she said, laughing, and putting one end of it into

his hands. He took hold of it, and, in his eagerness to do it right, immediately let it slip through his fingers, and it trailed all along the kitchen floor. "Ah, helpless one ! of what use will you ever be ?" she said.

"Try me again, Nelly ; I will do it better next time. I did not think it was so easily let go."

"No, no," said Nelly ; "here comes Bridget, and *won't* she express her sentiments if she sees we have soiled her best table-cloth ! Good-night to you, for a useless body !"—and she turned away to her work with a merry little song that she had been humming when he came to the kitchen-door. The soft clear notes were very sad to John then, though often before he had thought them so beautiful ; but they told of perfect indifference to him. He might come or go, and that young spirit, for whose happiness he would almost make any sacrifice, was unconscious of his presence or his absence. Full of her own dream of love and hope, she had no time to think of anything beside. There might come a time of sorrow, and then her heart would go back to its old home, to the friends who sat at its fireside ; but not now—not when the dreams of her girlhood were so near fulfilment. She had no room in her heart for long clumsy John, though he was such a good fellow, and her father's dear friend.

CHAPTER VI.

JOHN was gone, and the clothes finished, and Nelly sauntered out into the lawn at the back of the house which joined the churchyard. She met her married sister, Bessie Morgan, coming to the cottage by a side-path through the churchyard. The churchyard was only divided from the park by iron hurdles. Indeed, the village church was built on part of the domain belonging to Lady Vaughan's estate, and the living of Llansketty was in her gift. The Curate, therefore, of the Incumbent looked up to Lady Vaughan as to a little queen, and thought it a great honour when his little ones were invited to share in the advantages of some branches of education and association at "The Place." It was a great advantage, too, to Lady Vaughan's children to have some companions who would pull them down to the level of common mortals ; for in that far-away country village they were likely to think themselves princes, in comparison with their neighbours. So the young ones had grown up together like near relations ; and Nelly, the youngest of all, had been the pet and plaything of both houses, until she was sent to France, and Vivian Vaughan to his regiment, which was one of those destined to share the glories and horrors of the Crimea.

Before I describe Vivian, I must say something of his mother. She was a cold, handsome Englishwoman,

and reminded one more of a queen than of a mother. Dressed with the most perfect taste for every season of the year or time of the day, she was never seen by any one at a disadvantage. The time that was not spent at her toilet was frittered away with pleasant books. The presence of her children was evidently a weariness rather than an enjoyment to her, though she was by no means an unkind or harsh mother. Left a widow when quite young, she had made every arrangement for the proper education of her children. It was a proposition of her own that the young Llewellyns should become the intimate playfellows of the Vaughans; and, having made the suggestion, it was the governess's business to work it out.

When, in his boyhood, Vivian escaped from his governess and made his way to his mother's presence, his foppishness and beauty amused her; and at those times she cultivated to the utmost his pride of family. Of this there was no need, for he came from a haughty race. She regarded the Curate somewhat in the light of an old faithful servant admitted to companionship, a humble friend—of all positions in the world the most disagreeable; and Mrs. Llewellyn had done much to foster the absurd assumption by her meekness and humility and want of taste, which made her in everything the very opposite of her imperious neighbour. Hers was a good, motherly, strong heart—loving, sincere, self-sacrificing; but she was often coarsely dressed, for there was no money left to buy handsome clothes for her; and in the presence of her magnificent

friend she often felt the unfitness of their companionship. Of Vivian she knew very little since he was a young child ; for he was early sent to Harrow, and then to one of the Universities, until he obtained his commission in the army.

It was the custom for the young Llewellyns to be very much at "The Place ;" but the little Vaughans were seldom at the Curate's cottage. Lady Vaughan liked to have it so, and no one ever thought of questioning her dictum. Therefore the children grew up much more intimate with the Vaughan family than the parents were. Vivian Vaughan was now known to Mr. Llewellyn chiefly by his rumoured vices, and the Curate was trying, but too late, to wean his darling child from her love of the place and companions that had been such a life-long joy to her. The happiest memories of her childhood were connected with the time spent in Lady Vaughan's home, and the enjoyments there seemed like fairy pleasures, compared to her own uneventful life at the cottage ; for it was not until her return from France that her mother thought of the necessity of making her home minister to the cultivated tastes of the young girl.

Bessie Morgan and Nelly were sisters in heart as well as in name, and they came lovingly up the garden together. Bessie had been married about four years to a young clergyman of good family—for a little good blood seems to run in everybody's veins in Wales ; but, unfortunately for him, he shared another almost universal characteristic there, that of poverty,

or what would appear so to the affluent. His little, however, was enough for his thrifty wife to give him the comforts of life, if not its luxuries ; and his curacy at the neighbouring town added somewhat to their means. Bessie had walked over to her mother's, intending to return by moonlight ; and her husband was to meet her half-way. Though the distance was three miles, the hardy little woman did not fear ; and she remained chatting about all the pleasant trifles that fill up the interests of country life. She was called the plain one of the family, and by the side of Nelly perhaps deserved the name ; but her large dark, earnest eyes were almost as fine as Nelly's, and the firm mouth and well-developed chin made one respect the face more, if one admired it less. Her figure was shorter, and not so finely formed as her younger sister's ; but she was a woman of a bright spirit, and always inclined to look on the best, most hopeful and practical side of everything.

"Well, I must be going," said Bessie, as she was still called at home. "Put your hat on, and run a little way down the road with me, Nelly."

The garden hat was caught off the hat-stand, and they both ran out into the moonlight, full of the happiness of living, their hearts overflowing with a sense of beauty and joy, though the feeling was unspoken.

CHAPTER VII.

WHO has not felt sometimes in youth that glorious kindling of life, that exuberance of health, on bright moonlight nights or at the early sunrise, when the heart was too tumultuous for speech or silence, and active enjoyment or some joyous song was the best expression of the feelings? Nelly and Bessie ran out into the moonlight with that sense of joy all around them. Mr. Llewellyn's garden joined the churchyard, and the churchyard joined the park, which skirted the road for some distance. There were no houses near, and the girls felt as much at home there as in their own garden. They went together, laughing, singing little snatches of song, and chatting, till Bessie said,

"How far you have come, Nelly! Run back; I shall soon meet David now."

"Good night, sister mine," said Nelly; and no doubts or fears interfered with the gaiety and cordiality of her voice,—no presentiment on Bessie's part bade her drink in those parting words, for perhaps she might never hear such more. "Good night," again came from Nelly as she walked away; and as she unconsciously slackened her pace, her voice broke softly out into the song she had been singing at intervals all day:

"It comes, the beautiful the free,
The crown of all humanity,
In silence and alone,
To seek the elected one."

As she sang, she paused ; for she heard a footstep, and her heart beat fast. A small gate in the park fence opened, and Vivian Vaughan stood beside her.

"What lucky chance has brought my little singing bird out to-night? I have been hovering in the neighbourhood of the cottage, but did not dare come in, having no excuse ;" and he added, with a shade of haughty anger—"knowing I am not welcome."

"Ah ! Vivian, do not say that to me," she said, glancing up at him through her tears.

"Not to you, my pet, my little wife ; for are you not so since the night when we stole into the church and married ourselves, the angels looking on, as you said ?"

"Don't laugh about that, Vivian. I sometimes think it was very wicked."

On the evening Vivian referred to, Nelly had been in the church playing on the organ, and on leaving saw him in the park. They had walked among the trees for a time, and then re-entered the church ; for Vivian, who was passionately fond of music, wanted her to play some of his favourite airs. Their hearts softened, perhaps, by the music and the place, the thought came over both, on Vivian's opening a Prayer-book, to read the Marriage Service together, and, bending on their knees at the altar-rails, they read the words. Vivian murmured, "Amen," more solemnly than perhaps he had ever spoken in his life. Nelly said, looking into his face, "And so I dedicate my life to you, if God wills it." This had occurred only a few evenings before.

As they now walked on through the shadowy avenue, Nelly spoke in a low voice—so low, he was obliged to stoop to catch the words. She said, “I have not forgotten—I can never forget—reading those words, and I repeat again my vow to dedicate my life to you, if God so wills it.”

The last few words were uttered so earnestly and solemnly, that they seemed to silence him for a few minutes; but he resumed in a lighter tone, “That’s just as it should be, my sweet wife; and in token of your truth I expect implicit obedience from you. I do not intend to live much longer without you, and you must be prepared to make some sacrifices for me. You must leave Llansketty without any one knowing it but ourselves.”

She started and looked up at him. He took no notice of the tightening grasp of the little hand, or the tremor that shook her frame, but went on: “I will arrange for you.”

“Oh! but, Vivian,” she broke in with, “it will break my father’s heart to think he has lost me.”

“You must think of me, your husband—as you say, your husband before God. After we are married, we can let your father know enough to comfort him.”

Again the little hand pressed his, in thankfulness this time, and she glanced slily up, her heart full of gratitude for this thought for her father.

Vivian continued, in rather an injured tone: “You must also remember it will be my entire ruin if anything of this should get talked about. You

know I am quite dependent on my mother, and you know what my fate would be if she could only hear us talking now."

She drew a little apart from him, her swelling heart full of words of sorrow—sorrow that he had ever sought her love; and yet how could she utter them? Was she not his wife in heart and soul? They had gone too far now for even a mother to come between them; yet she could not help shrinking from him when he spoke so carelessly of his mother's anger. She felt like a bird fascinated by some stronger will.

With his arm round her waist, he had drawn her on into the park, and they sauntered under the shadows of the old trees, Nelly listening to a voice that had for her a magic influence. She knew much that he said was wrong; but she had no power to tell him so. Alas! this early love was at present the religion of her life. There were other customs and habits learnt from the associations of home that she would have thought it very wicked not to observe, and they were called by her religion; but they consisted in religious exercises and forms, in the midst of which her heart would often wander away to the idol she worshipped.

CHAPTER VIII.

DURING Nelly's years at school, she had chosen her companions chiefly from among the German scholars,

and that companionship had fostered the extremes in her own character. The beautiful services, too, in the Roman Catholic Cathedral to which the school girls often went with some of their Roman Catholic companions, had charmed her fancy and gratified her love of music, and therefore the High-church forms in her own communion were to her the most grateful symbols of her religion ; but the real religion of her soul was love, self-sacrificing, impassioned, all-absorbing love. She asked nothing for herself but to be able to impart all happiness to the one beloved one. That would be her heaven. With her heart full of such devotion, she walked by Vivian's side in the shadow of the elm-trees, the rays of moonlight flickering through and touching her here and there as if with silent entreaty. The bright light could only glance, as they passed, on the outward form of the young girl, and shewed her to his eyes for a moment like some exquisite picture. There was no voice from the spirit-land to speak loud enough to reach her inner life. And so she listened.

"You will not shrink from your promise, Nelly," Vivian said. "Remember, such an opportunity may never occur again to us. It is my mother's own expressed wish that you should go with my sisters and the governess to the sea-side. I can manage to get you away from Mademoiselle Marie. Her dear little French head is full of languages and deportment and implicit faith in Lady Vaughan and her family, particularly Master Vivian."

He bent his handsome face, sparkling with fun, down to hers, and tried to win an answering glance ; but Nelly's heart was too full for laughter. He went on :

"Do you recollect, Mademoiselle used to say, '*Bon Dieu!* but dat is de hansom fils'?—and ever since he heard it, the *hansom fils* has turned the pretty French-woman round his little finger. You will have the invitation to-morrow, and must persuade Mrs. Llewellyn to let you accept it."

Nelly murmured an assent ; she could not speak out ; and he, who had never denied himself a single gratification, thought how surpassingly handsome she was, and how the fellows in his regiment would envy him the love of such a woman.

Vivian Vaughan was a gay, self-indulgent, unprincipled young man. Everything he had wanted from childhood upward he had managed to get, and his present all-absorbing passion was Nelly. He fancied that without her he could not be happy. He thought if he must marry her he would, and keep it secret until his mother's death or some lucky chance helped him out of the scrape ; but have her he must, though all the mothers in the world said no. His early companionship with Nelly had made him feel, if he wanted to win her, he must affect a higher tone of morality than he believed in, and keep out of sight his contempt for the highest and purest types of womanhood, though it was one of the strongest feelings of his sensual nature. He loved Nelly for her loveliness, her beauty ; all that was highest, best, purest in her, he sneeringly

disbelieved in. There was nothing in him to answer to the noble, generous, or pure; he did not believe in such feelings, because he could not, he did not, know what they were. But in manner he was a perfect gentleman—elegant, refined, brilliantly witty, and dangerously kind to poor Nelly; and to her, in excuse for his conduct, he pleaded his passionate, devoted love. So, years ago, he had bent all the energies of his nature to possess himself of a pony or a dog; but in six months the favourite would be thrown on one side, neglected or forgotten, unless his sisters took it under their care. As Nelly and he now stood in the park, an old favourite of his, that had been made a pet of by the ladies, was grazing near to where they were. It was a chestnut pony, and knew Nelly's voice; it came up to them with a low whinnying neigh. Vivian raised his stick; but Nelly said, "Oh! don't drive it away. Poor Bob!" and she laid her hand on his mane. "Do you recollect," she said, "how fond you once were of him?" For a moment a dread crept over her heart, but she would utter no word of doubt; it seemed sacrilege. He took her hand from the pony's neck and said, "I only feared he would betray us."

"That reminds me I must go," Nelly answered. "It must be near prayer-time, and father will miss me."

"Well, I suppose I had better let you go now," he said slowly, still holding her hand, as she stood in the bright moonlight, and he in the shadow of a large tree.

"Do not come into the light, Vivian," she said hurriedly. "You may be seen, if they are looking for me ; and I think I see some one in the churchyard."

She drew her hand from his, and with a farewell glance and word turned quickly towards home, the pony following with his nose over her shoulder. She hurried over the grass, wet with the evening dew, towards the small gate in the iron hurdles that separated the churchyard from the park. As she approached it, she thought she saw her father standing there, but on coming nearer she knew it to be John Davies. The half-frightened look on her face changed to one of petulant surprise. "I thought you had gone home two hours ago. Don't drive away the pony," she continued, as he put up his hand, for Bob was trying to come through the gate after her ; "I like him to follow me. He does not come to pry into my movements, and watch me as a cat would a mouse. I never can come out now but I am sure to meet you watching for me."

He stood in the pathway to prevent her passing, and, somewhat against her will, took her hand and held it. "Hear me, Nelly," he said, with a strange and unwonted tone of command in his voice that surprised and subdued her. "I have been watching you, and I have often watched you before, with the same companion, in sorrow too great for anger. It is no use my telling you what Vivian Vaughan is. You would not believe it from others, much less from me."

"Let me go," she said ; "I have heard quite enough. My father will be waiting for me."

"He will not care if he sees you with me," John answered, still firmly holding her hand ; "and you must hear what I have to say—and you must hear it now, Nelly."

She stood still, half defiant, wholly angry, and with her eyes bent on the ground, so that she did not see the look of pitying love with which he regarded her.

"I do not know," he continued, "if Lady Vaughan is aware of these meetings ; but I am sure they will lead to some great and agonizing sorrow." Then in a low, earnest tone, "My love shall never trouble you again ; but I have a boon to crave."

As she listened to his voice her heart beat fast ; his true friendship, his earnest life, many acts of kindness to her father and herself, flitted before her memory and touched her inmost feelings ; but she made no sign ; for had he not also spoken slightly of her beloved one ? Still she listened as he spoke.

"Accept my friendship, Nelly ; and if the hours of sorrow come, remember you have a friend who will be more faithful to you than a brother."

A few moments before, she had a whole world of anger to throw at him for his scornful reference to Vivian ; now the kind words had brought back the memory of the long-trying friendship, mixed with a shivering, unacknowledged dread of some terrible suffering. She looked up at him through her tears, and

met the gaze of those kind, sad eyes that seemed to pierce into her very soul.

"Promise me, Nelly," he said, "if you ever want a friend, I shall be that one."

She moved uneasily, as though she would have taken her hand from his: failing in that, she pressed a stone into the soft path with her little well-dressed foot; then, looking up suddenly, she said, "I promise on one condition—that you swear by the most solemn oath you can bind yourself with, never to mention my meetings with Vivian."

He paused for a moment in deep thought, and then said, in so haughty a tone that Nelly looked up in surprise, "It needs no vow to keep me from speaking of Captain Vaughan, if that be your wish. God must judge between you and him; but for your father's sake, and yours too, Nelly, I will watch over you with all the power I have."

She shook back her long curls, which had veiled her face as her head was bent down from his, and was about to answer him with pettish impatience, when at that moment her father's voice was heard at the wicket that led from the cottage garden to the churchyard.

"Nelly, Nelly, do you know it is past ten o'clock?"

She had no time to answer; for at her father's voice John let go her hand, and in making way for her to pass nearly stumbled over a grave. "Oh! it is you John, is it?" the old gentleman said in a pleased tone, as he came up the pathway. "I did not know you had been walking with Nelly."

In spite of her agitation, a merry smile came over Nelly's face. Kind, blundering John, she thought, what can have made him so earnest?—but it was very opportune his coming to meet me, and father thinking we had been walking together. She ran on before them into the house and up the stairs so fleetly, that the old boards seemed taken by surprise, and had not time to creak their omens of evil. Still, I don't think the ancient staircase was going to be outdone that way by the modern mahoganies. It could bide its time and keep its own secrets.

CHAPTER IX.

NELLY's wet, tell-tale boots were changed, her hair smoothed, and she was down-stairs as quickly as she ran up. The Curate read from the sacred book, and uttered his short earnest prayer. The blessing of God Almighty sounded sweet and solemn from the good man's lips; but Nelly heard it not. She knelt in reverential attitude from habit, and she had a consciousness that the usual words were being said; but her whole soul was pre-occupied with one overwhelming thought. She had promised to leave that home, and for a short time it must be in sorrow and anger. After she was married all would be well; but she must go through with this trial for his sake; and as she knelt, the only prayer that her soul could utter

was, "Father have mercy—forgive!" When they rose from their knees, Nelly pleaded a headache, and went to her own room.

After a moment's pause, Mrs. Llewellyn said, "Nelly is not herself to-night. Has anything happened between her and you, John?"

"Yes, Mrs. Llewellyn; I may as well tell you at once," he answered. "Nelly and I have spoken together; we understand each other now. My love will never pain her more; but we are friends—earnest, true friends—do not trouble her with questions. They will only grieve her." After a moment he continued—"One great hope is gone; but still, with God's help, I will strive to do my work in life well."

He gave his hand to Mr. Llewellyn, and the Curate held it for a minute silently. They said no word of good-night, but the earnest pressure sealed again their faithful friendship. Mrs. Llewellyn nodded her farewell and turned quickly away, her kind heart as full of sorrow as her eyes were full of tears.

"Well, well," she murmured, "my wilful, beautiful child, God keep you from harm! Would that you could have loved that good man!"

Early after breakfast a note arrived at the cottage from Lady Vaughan, asking permission for Nelly to join the young ladies and their governess in a visit to a side-side village not many miles from Llansketty. Mrs. Llewellyn was the more inclined to accept the invitation because the governess was going to leave, the education of her pupils being finished, and her

duties as a governess over. Mademoiselle Marie had been a kind friend to Nelly, as well as the Vaughans ; and it was with real regret they all thought of the approaching parting. Captain Vaughan, the note said, would not accompany his sisters ; for Sir Harry, who was travelling in Canada, had written to ask his brother to join him there, if he could procure a few months' leave of absence from his regiment.

Sir Harry, the eldest son of Lady Vaughan, had all his mother's faults of character magnified. The courteous refinement of a well-bred gentleman met the eye ; but if you tried to find a heart under all that good-breeding, you found the man's nature cold, hard and proud. If a sister of his had made a *mésalliance*, he would have said, in a perfectly unmoved tone, "She has pleased herself, I suppose, but she cannot now expect me to sacrifice myself to her choice ;" and he would have put her away from his life with as much unconcern as an old pair of gloves. If there was any one in the world to whom he shewed feeling, it was to Captain Vaughan. Even when Vivian was a boy, Sir Harry would condescend to be amused by him ; and as he grew to manhood, Vivian's perfect though effeminate beauty and his polished wit seemed a source of great enjoyment to him. Vivian, as the younger son, had to make his way in the world ; and Lady Vaughan and Sir Harry both looked forward to his making position by a rich or noble marriage.

CHAPTER X.

WHEN Mrs. Llewellyn read Lady Vaughan's note through, and found the party was to consist only of the young ladies and the governess, she joyfully gave her consent to Nelly's going with them for the month they were to remain away. For, she thought, it will take her from the attentions and chance meetings with the Captain, and by the time they return he will be with his brother in Canada. She busied herself with all her daughter's preparations and packing. They were to go on the following day, so Nelly had no time to see Mrs. Morgan. In the evening a servant brought a note from Miss Vaughan to Nelly. It felt thicker than usual, and she took it to her own room to read. When she broke the envelope she saw a note from Vivian. She hastily read. It ran as follows :

"Dearest,—I stopped the bearer who was bringing Ann's note to you, and took the liberty of changing the envelope and enclosing my note with it. While you are with Mademoiselle, you will receive an invitation to go on and spend a few days or a week with my grand-aunt, Lady De Vere. Ask no questions, but accept the invitation, and destroy the note when you have read it. The old lady is very fond of you, you know, and she will make arrangements for you to come on to Gryffydd station. You must be sure to

start the day and hour she mentions, and her carriage will meet you and take you on. Say nothing to any one of this, my own sweet wife, but trust and love me, and remember your vow of obedience.

Yours, &c."

She glanced at Miss Vaughan's note. It only required in answer a few words to say she should be ready in the morning. The answer sent, she returned to her own room. Again and again she read Vivian's note, and wondered if he could have made a confidante of his old loving aunt. Perhaps so. Nelly remembered with joy how fond the old lady always seemed of her, and her heart grew rich with hope, and proud in the consciousness of his devoted love. She might perhaps soon be able to tell them at home of her happy lot, and she began building castles in the air, in which her father's old age was radiant with her love and care. She could not sing that night; but she ran in and out in happy excitement, the little fussy dog going everywhere with her, and quite understanding something was up.

After she was in bed, her mother lingered in her room, looking to see if anything had been forgotten; then turning to say good night, she tucked the clothes about her with a mother's fond touch, and thought, "How beautiful my child is!" She softly left the room, for the rest of the family had been in their beds some time, and no human footsteps were likely to disturb their repose; but the staircase creaked and

cracked as though all the toothless old wood spirits were making a night of it.

The carriage with its freight of happy girls called for Nelly soon after breakfast ; and when they were gone, Mrs. Llewellyn walked through the park to call on Lady Vaughan. She found that lady, for a wonder, restless and out of spirits, for which reason she welcomed her old friend more gladly than usual. It was a relief to her ennui even to talk to Mrs. Llewellyn.

The mothers talked of their children, and Mrs. Llewellyn learned that day, more than she had ever done before, how ambitious Lady Vaughan was for the aggrandizement of her favourite child Vivian. He had obtained his present rank of Captain in the army by purchase, and she thought professional honours came so slowly, they were hardly worth the trouble of wishing for.

"You see, my dear friend," Lady Vaughan said, continuing a conversation, "a younger son must have a profession, and the army is best, for it gets a man into good society. I very much wish Vivian to exchange, or by purchase to get into the Guards. The household troops are much more desirable than the regiments of the line ; but Sir Harry does not like the expense ; and just now, I suppose, as the war is talked about, it would not do to change his regiment."

The lady, leaning back on the sofa, played with the flossy ears of a little dog that lay coiled up by her side, and remained for a few moments in silent thought. Her handsome son's future career was a pleasant

dream to her. When she again addressed her companion, it was still of him she spoke.

"He must hold himself in readiness to return from Canada at a short notice," she said. "I wonder much at his having accepted Sir Harry's invitation. Six months ago he would not hear of it, and now he is mad to go."

Mrs. Llewellyn was a capital listener. She looked up from her netting. "Captain Vaughan has gone from home to-day, has he not?" she said.

"Yes," Lady Vaughan answered; "he has gone to head-quarters to make some further arrangements about his leave; and if there is a steamer that suits his time, he will leave for Canada directly; so that I may not hear from him again until he gets to Quebec."

"Does Sir Harry enjoy his sports there? I suppose the hunting and fishing are very exciting to an Englishman," Mrs. Llewellyn said.

"Well, I suppose so," Lady Vaughan answered. "Sir Harry always seemed *ennuied* to death by his life in England, and I am sure I do not wonder at it; you see," with a slight tone of pity for the ignorance of her listener, "there is so little novelty. For two or three months in the season, perhaps, town is endurable, with their clubs and other enjoyments. Paris, too, does for a time; but one gets tired of that sort of thing over and over again."

Mrs. Llewellyn smiled. She thought of her monotonous life; for she had never been even as far as the English border, and yet it had not occurred to her that

she was tired of life, or even unhappy. Her household cares and loves were enough for her ; and in her humility she thought Lady Vaughan must be so superior to her, that intellectually she might want more amusement.

"Will Sir Harry and Captain Vaughan remain long at Quebec?" Mrs. Llewellyn said.

"Oh dear no, I think not," Lady Vaughan replied. "The part of the country where Sir Harry is at present is in that direction, and their letters will be sent there. I suppose they will have some mode of communication with Quebec when they are away fishing or hunting. Send a groom, probably, now and then for their letters. They would think that sort of thing a great deal of trouble in England, I dare say. But young men in pursuit of pleasure are so inconsistent." She smiled languidly at the thought, but went on talking. "I should not think they would go far into the country, as Vivian is likely to be recalled at any time. He would not have obtained leave just now if he had not had a friend in the right quarter. But I merely surmise, my dear friend ; my boys never make a confidante of me."

Mrs. Llewellyn was counting her stiches ; but she looked up from her work with a cheery, hopeful smile, which seemed to say, Yet you must be happy with those two handsome English gentlemen for your sons ; but she did not say any word. She did not presume to offer comfort to Lady Vaughan ; and in truth the lady did not want it. Everything connected with her

sons was perfect in her eyes. She had only been led on in her unwonted cordiality to say more than was usual with her. With a slight effort, as though the subject required a little condescension, she changed the conversation to Nelly.

"What a very lovely girl your youngest daughter is growing, Mrs. Llewellyn!" she said. "Do you intend her to remain at home? I should think a governess's situation would be best for her. It would keep her somewhat under restraint. I dare say I could do something for her in that way; and, you must forgive me, my dear friend, when I say I think it would teach her the position in life she occupies better than any other discipline; for our pretty Nelly is a little, a very little, inclined to forget the differences of rank, and conduct herself as though she were quite the equal of all her friends."

A sudden flush of warm honest blood rushed over the other mother's face, and she thought, "My Nelly is far, far the superior of any one I have ever known, gentle or simple;" but she uttered no sound. Her netting-needles went a little faster, and the portly figure sat a shade more stiffly upright; but these slight signs of anger were beneath the notice of Lady Vaughan. She had said her word of reprimand. The Llewellyns sometimes wanted a little taking down, and it would be well also, she thought, to withdraw the girls from their very intimate companionship with one another when the governess left. Thinking such thoughts, she leaned back on the sofa, in her haughty

beauty, almost forgetful of the presence of her companion, and certainly a striking contrast to the kind-hearted, plainly-dressed Curate's wife, who began to think of her dear old man and his dinner. So she gathered up her netting and made her formal adieu to the great lady, promising to come again often while the young ladies were away.

CHAPTER XI.

Two or three days after her visit to "The Place," Mrs. Llewellyn was surprised by Lady Vaughan's pony carriage stopping at the cottage. The Curate hurried out to the front gate and attended her in with old-fashioned courtesy. The lady was in a very genial temper, and condescended to treat the ambassador of Christ's truth almost as an equal. She sat chatting about some repairs that were going on in the church and the school-house, and asked a few kindly questions about John Davies.

"I had nearly forgotten to tell you," she said, "I have had a note from Mademoiselle, in which she tells me my aunt, Lady De Vere, hearing the girls were at Llandor, has asked Nelly to go on to the 'Abbey' and spend a week or two with her. The old lady, I dare say, is dull in that worn-out old ruin, and Nelly's companionship will do her a great deal of good. Of course Mademoiselle allowed her to accept

the invitation, and she will leave for the 'Abbey,' I suppose, to-day. Lady De Vere is a very great admirer of Nelly, you know, Mr. Llewellyn," she added, with one of her most gracious smiles.

Mr. Llewellyn looked up at her, his kind, benevolent face radiant with pleasure. His darling was enjoying herself, and Lady Vaughan was so kind—two great events in his monotonous life.

The lady soon after took her leave, and the peaceful life at the cottage went on as usual. Mrs. Morgan was often there. She thought her mother looked dull. John Davies, too, was in and out; but there seemed a shadow over everything except the Curate. He was unusually light-hearted and gay. He talked so much of Nelly, it was easy to see where his thoughts were. He tended all her pets, her birds, her poultry. At tea-time it was he who gave pussy her saucer of milk, and all day long he and the little dog were drawn together by some mysterious sympathy. Pepper abandoned his old haunts and took up with the Curate. He followed him up stairs and down, in-doors and out, wherever he went. At night, instead of making his bed on the mat by Nelly's bedroom window, he appropriated the one at Mr. Llewellyn's bedroom door; and in the morning, before going down to breakfast, they would peep into Nelly's empty room and look into each other's faces. Pepper had no words; there was no need for them. The dog and master knew quite well what each other thought. Then the Curate's slow step went down stairs, and Pepper kept time

with him, step by step. He seemed to think it wrong to get down before his master; though when Nelly was at home they often made a race of it, and Pepper was always the winner. Now, however, his humour was changed, and as he went down, at every loud crack the stairs made he pricked up his pugnacious bits of ears, and was ready to do battle with anything within the ken of common mortal or Mr. Home.

Three weeks soon slipped by. One morning Mr. Llewellyn and Pepper were in the orchard. It joined the garden and skirted the road. Pepper seemed to have a world of business on hand; the Curate was looking at the apples. It was a fine season for them, and Nelly was so fond of them, the father thought. The bright morning sun came sparkling among the leaves, and through the openings in the apple-trees the park could be seen in all its beautiful autumnal foliage. Pepper pricked up his ears. A horseman was coming fast down the road. The dog ran to the hedge, but he was too well-bred to go after the horse, though the natural propensity was as strong in him, if one might judge from the bristles, eyes, tail, and even the tips of his toes, stiff with excitement and pugnacity, as original sin could be in his master's kind, warm heart.

Mr. Llewellyn looked surprised, and went into the house. His wife's name was Martha, and, calling for her, he said, when she came into the sitting-room, "The groom that went with Mademoiselle and the girls to Llandor has ridden down the road in great

haste. As he passed he seemed for a moment inclined to stop, and then changed his mind, I suppose ; for he went on faster than ever to the short entrance through the park."

"I will put on my bonnet, and go down and see if anything is the matter," Mrs. Llewellyn said, with a slight trembling in her voice. Then, more hopefully, she continued, "It may be only some whim of the young ladies. They may want something in a hurry, and have sent the groom over for it."

"Perhaps so," he said ; "but go over at once. I will go with you."

"I think you had better remain here," she answered kindly. "It is not more than eleven o'clock, and Lady Vaughan will scarcely have left the breakfast-room. She might not like a visit from you so early."

"Well, well, as you think best ; but do not stay long. Come back as soon as you can, and tell me all about it."

The last words were said as she was tying her bonnet-strings and walking down the churchyard path, Mr. Llewellyn in his impatience following her close, and, the path being narrow, having to walk with one foot on it and the other among the graves, as he repeated his request that she would not be long.

CHAPTER XII.

MR. LLEWELLYN shut the gate after his wife, and leaned both arms on the top rail, not in a listless attitude ; he was too anxious for that ; but because he was going to wait there and watch for his wife's return. Pepper sat down at his feet. He was not going a step into the park, not he. He read something that made him wag his little stump of a tail slowly and doubtfully two or three times, as he looked into his master's face, and then he too sat himself to watch the retreating figure of Mrs. Llewellyn. They saw her every now and then through the trees.

The mother went on as fast as she could, with beating heart and trembling limbs. She did not go up to the grand entrance. There was a wing of the house very much hidden by trees ; it was the oldest part of the building, and not much used by the present family. A path through the shrubbery conducted to a door in this part of the house. It was the way the Llewellyns usually entered ; for it led to the apartments of the governess, and thence to the morning room occupied by Lady Vaughan. Half of the door was glass, and the housekeeper passing through the hall saw Mrs. Llewellyn hurriedly approaching. She was a kind, friendly, good woman, who had lived with Lady Vaughan from Sir Harry's birth. She would have been a noble-hearted, generous woman to all, had not the chains of custom warped her feelings ;

but to the Vaughans she was a slave, not so much physically, for she had a very easy place, as mentally. What my Lady said and thought, that Mrs. Douglass said and thought too, and repeated in the reverential whisper a Roman Catholic would use when speaking of the mysteries of his faith. Next to Lady Vaughan and those friends of like rank that visited at "The Place," Mrs. Llewellyn stood high in her esteem, and she loved the young Llewellyns almost as well as the dear children of her mistress. She had been summoned to the breakfast-room ; for the groom Mr. Llewellyn saw riding past had brought a note from Mademoiselle Marie to Lady Vaughan. As soon as she read it, she sent for Mrs. Douglass, who was returning from the interview when she saw Mrs. Llewellyn coming through the shrubbery. She came forward with a kindly smile and slight bend of respect for the clergyman's wife ; but the troubled look on her face did not give comfort to poor Mrs. Llewellyn.

"Is anything the matter?" she said to Mrs. Douglass, as they crossed the hall. "Are the young ladies well?"

Mrs. Douglass did not answer her directly, but said, "You saw the groom, then, who brought Mademoiselle's note?"

"I did not see him," she said ; "but Mr. Llewellyn saw him ride past in a great hurry, and he thought perhaps something was wrong—some of them might be ill."

"No, they are not ill," Mrs. Douglass said evasively.

She continued, "Lady De Vere is coming. She sent word to that effect by the groom."

"Old Lady De Vere coming! I thought she never rode such a distance now. Is Nelly coming with her, do you know?"

The last few words had been said at the library door, the room into which Mrs. Douglass was shewing Mrs. Llewellyn. The housekeeper did not answer the last question, but said, "I will go and tell my Lady you are here."

The room Mrs. Llewellyn was in was a long, low, old-fashioned room, lighted at one end by a large oriel window. Both sides of the room were covered with books and pictures, some of the latter of great value. The mantle-piece and a great deal of wood-work around and above it were of oak, most beautifully carved in the quaint, queer devices of the olden time. The library had been part of the old house, and before Sir Harry turned it into its present use was called the oak-chamber. Mrs. Llewellyn did not sit down; she walked slowly towards the fire-place, and gazed up at the carved figures. She had seen them often, but they never before had such a fascination for her; and, seen by the shaded light, seemed to wink and jeer and poke their old jokes at her. Vexed at herself for letting anything take her thoughts from Nelly, she went to the window. On turning round, she heard the door open, and Lady Vaughan entered. She was dressed in a costly morning wrapper, cut somewhat close to her figure, and sloping with very large gores

into a train. Her stately beauty was set off by her dress ; but she looked cold, hard and angry. Mrs. Douglass, who had attended her in, drew a chair rather more forward for her accommodation, and as Mrs. Llewellyn was still standing, she did the same for her, looking at her with an expression of anxiety and sorrow that did not tend to re-assure her.

Lady Vaughan waited, silent and stern, until Mrs. Douglass withdrew. Then she said, turning to Mrs. Llewellyn, whom she had only recognized by a cold, distant bow, "There has been some terrible deception practised on Mademoiselle Marie, Mrs. Llewellyn. I should have sent for you or Mr. Llewellyn, had you not come."

"Nelly!" burst from the mother's lips ; "is she well? And the young ladies—what can be the matter?"

"If you will listen calmly, I will tell you all I know," Lady Vaughan said, in a stately, unmoved voice.

Mrs. Llewellyn rose from her seat and made a step or two nearer where Lady Vaughan was sitting. "Tell me first," she said in a voice of suppressed pain, "is she well? Has any accident be——"

She would have finished the sentence if she could ; but the words died away to a murmur. The quivering lips could not utter the fearful thought.

Lady Vaughan looked at her for a moment, and then said, "Nelly is well, as far as I know ; but she has left Mademoiselle's protection. The note that came to Nelly as from Lady De Vere was a forgery, and I

believe she must have been aware of the fact; for Miss Vaughan and Mademoiselle both say her spirits were so altered after she received it, they were astonished; and when she wished them good-bye, she said, 'Do not think hardly of me when I am gone; remember me as the Nelly you loved so well.'

Mrs. Llewellyn was about to speak; but Lady Vaughan, with a haughty gesture and cold, hard voice, went on: "I feel so indignant," she said, "that your daughter has chosen to make my house the scene of her elopement; for doubtless it is some romantic attachment with an acquaintance she picked up when she was in France."

She leaned back in her chair with the flush of anger lighting up her otherwise pale face, and giving fire to her usually cold, fine eyes.

There was a pause. Then Mrs. Llewellyn said, in a tone as cold and quite as haughty as that of the great lady herself, "I am quite sure Nelly had no part in forging Lady De Vere's name. My child is as spotless and pure as your own. There has been some terrible mistake, as you say; and while we are talking, she is still unsought." Rising hastily, she drew her shawl about her. Then a sudden thought seemed to strike her. She looked at Lady Vaughan—no humility in that look now. Her lost child absorbed her whole soul. The mothers were equal in God's sight. "Captain Vaughan can tell me of my child," she said, slowly and earnestly, and the words were calm from their agony.

"Captain Vaughan!" his mother replied, in a voice of concentrated scorn—"my son, Mrs. Llewellyn, and you aware of the fact! But my sons are both in Canada."

"They are there now," Mrs. Llewellyn said; "but Captain Vaughan might not have sailed when Nelly was taken from Mademoiselle's care."

"May I ask what reason you have for making these allusions to Captain Vaughan?" her Ladyship said, in bitter, sarcastic tone.

Mrs. Llewellyn paused. She could not answer that question in the straightforward way she would have liked to do. She had only feared there might be an affection springing up between the Captain and Nelly; she had no proofs to give of the fact, and in her simple, truthful way she said so.

"Why did you not tell me of your fears before?" Lady Vaughan said. "Surely it would have been the best way of putting a stop to such a preposterous idea, unless, indeed, you wished her to entrap my son's affections."

Mrs. Llewellyn made no answer for a moment; she stood still. Then the sorrowful words burst from her heart: "Nelly, Nelly! my child, my child! would to God you had died ere he had entrapped your affections!"

Lady Vaughan rose with scorn unutterable; but the Curate's wife, folding her shawl about her, walked silently from the room and out of the side-door by which she had entered.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE Curate leaned on the top-rail of the gate and looked into the park. When he was alone with nature, God's hand seemed to touch him, and remind him how love had followed him and would follow him. The beautiful autumn morning had whispered to his soul, and he was not afraid. A calm sense of delight soon mingled with his troubled thoughts. As he waited for his wife, he heard footsteps behind him, and on turning saw Bessie Morgan and John Davies crossing the churchyard to where he was standing. He told them of the groom riding past, and of Mrs. Llewellyn's absence at "The Place." They laughed at his fears, and tried to persuade him to go into the cottage and wait Mrs. Llewellyn's return there ; but he would not move ; so they seated themselves on some tombstones near, and chatted idly of home matters. Pepper, lying at their feet, kept watch with one eye, while he slept with the other. He could not quite believe there was no sorrow coming, and nobody to catch it. John Davies had joined Mrs. Morgan in laughing away her father's doubts ; but he was the first to catch sight of Mrs. Llewellyn's returning figure, and, quietly opening the gate, he went forward to meet her. She still clasped her shawl tightly around her in the same attitude in which she had walked out of Lady Vaughan's presence, and came on with a quick, hurried step. John soon saw something was

wrong, and, hurrying forward, took her hand and drew it through his arm. They looked into each other's faces, and a convulsive sob shook the poor mother's frame. Bessie and Mr. Llewellyn at that moment came up to them, and leaning her head on her husband's shoulder she wept for some moments in silent misery.

"What is it, mother?" the Curate almost whispered.

"She is gone! Nelly is gone! It is three weeks since any one has seen her."

"Gone!" they repeated in every accent of surprise—"where?"

"The note that invited her to visit Lady De Vere was a forgery," Mrs. Llewellyn sobbed out. "Lady De Vere never asked Nelly to visit her, and on leaving, Mademoiselle said, she was in very bad spirits. At the time, they did not think so much of that, as they did afterwards, when they found she had not gone to the Abbey."

The Curate stood still in mute surprise and despair.

"Scoundrel!" broke from John Davies between his set teeth. And then, as though registering a vow, he continued: "If he does not use her well, there can be no spot on earth where he and I can live together!"

It was evident Mrs. Llewellyn and John Davies both thought of Vivian as the cause of their sorrow, though John had mentioned no name. They walked through the churchyard and garden, and entered the cottage, glad to be out of the way of the laughing sunshine. They could have darkened the house as

for a funeral, and sat down still and quiet in their woe. John Davies alone was restless. He was in the garden and back again every five minutes. After one of these turns he came abruptly to the window and said, "After you have seen Lady De Vere, I will go in pursuit of Nelly, and never give up until I find her"—he paused—adding; slowly, "alive or dead."

The father laid his trembling hand on the strong man's arm, and in broken accents uttered a low "Thank you, my friend!" And John Davies accepted his trust.

Bessie slipped out of the room as soon as she could, and told Bridget of their sorrow. She was an old friend as well as servant; for she had lived with Mrs. Llewellyn from the time Bessie was a little girl. Poor Bridget! it was like a death to her. She sat with her apron over her head, rocking herself to and fro for a short time in abject sorrow; then, with the instinct of her position to be up and doing, she bustled about her work, the tears coursing each other down her cheeks, and she, in her absence of mind, taking the corner of her apron, or the end of her gown, or, in lieu of that, even her bare arm, to rub them away, finishing up each endeavour with a great sniff and sob. Poor Bridget! she did her best; but each article in domestic use spoke of memories connected with the lost girl, who had grown up so happy and so beautiful among them.

The dinner that day was a pretence. Each tried to eat something for the sake of the other, and Bridget

had taken unusual pains to have things as she knew the master and mistress liked to have them ; but it was a relief to all when a servant came from "The Place" with a note, saying Lady De Vere was with Lady Vaughan, and would like to see either Mr. or Mrs. Llewellyn as soon as possible. In the midst of her sorrow, the minister's wife instantly thought of the clean white neck-tie and best black coat ; and though her husband at first impatiently said No, she succeeded before he left in making him what she called fit to be seen.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE Curate was expected at the great house ; for he had scarcely raised his hand to the bell ere the door was opened by a man in livery. Just inside the hall stood another gentlemanly-looking person, dressed somewhat like a clergyman, but in superfine black, ready to conduct him to the presence of Lady De Vere. As the man opened the door and announced Mr. Llewellyn, the old lady rose from her reclining position on the sofa, and walked forward to meet him. When she stood up, her great age was apparent, and one was struck by her fragile loveliness. In her best days she could not have been much over the middle height. Her slight form was clothed in a dove-coloured silk, very full and long. A shawl of some

soft clinging material covered her shoulders, and her white silky hair was braided under a tulle cap almost as plain as that of a quakeress. She took the minister's hand in both hers, her mild brown eyes dim with tears, and said, "My dear friend, how my heart aches for you! Sit down, and I will give you all the information I can. It is for that I have come so far—far at least for me."

Mr. Llewellyn led her back to the sofa, for she was too weak to walk without tottering. The old lady continued: "I could not bear the subject should be discussed through third persons, so I came to you myself; for I love Nelly almost as well as my grand-nieces."

Mr. Llewellyn bowed slightly, then sat down, and fidgetted with his hat and gloves, but did not dare to raise his eyes to hers. Her kind sympathy had made his heart brim over. She continued: "When first I became aware of the facts about your child's disappearance, I sent my man to Gryffydd station to ascertain if any young lady answering to Nelly's description had been seen there on the day in question. It is such a small country station, that I thought a girl of her appearance was not likely to be forgotten, and I found I was right. One of the porters quite well remembered a young lady, whose appearance answered to Nelly's person and dress, stopping at the station by the 10.40 train, and asking if Lady De Vere's carriage was there. While she was putting the question, a country-woman gave into her hand a note. On read-

ing it, the young lady ordered her luggage to be carried to a plain dark brougham, without any coat-of-arms on it, that was in waiting, and was driven away."

"It would seem from that, she went of her own accord," Mr. Llewellyn said, raising his head with an inquiring look to Lady De Vere; "and the strangest thing of all is, she has not written."

"I have my own opinion of the matter," the old lady said; "but I will tell you what I think angers my niece, Lady Vaughan, very much—so much, that I shall not speak on the subject again to her; but to you, my friend, I shall say all I think; for it is only just to do so."

She smiled kindly but sadly on the Curate, who was sitting near the sofa, and held out her hand to him. He took it in his for a moment, and the slight pressure of the fragile fingers assured him of her sympathy. Mr. Llewellyn did not speak. Lady De Vere went on to say: "I fear my grand-nephew Vivian has done this, and intends to keep a secret marriage, perhaps, from his mother's knowledge until her anger has passed away." After a pause, and with tremulous accents, she added: "He little knows her if he thinks she will ever forgive a deed like that. The race she comes from never forgive."

As the old lady ceased speaking, a tear rolled down her cheek and fell on her white hand. Very sad it was to see that aged face so troubled. Mr. Llewellyn found it hard to bear, as he answered her last remark.

"Lady Vaughan uses as her daily prayer, 'Forgive

us, as we hope to be forgiven," he said. "There is indeed much to be yet learned in this Christian land." He rose and stood before the old lady, who was lying back on the sofa almost exhausted with the long conversation. "I thank you from my heart," the Curate continued. "Your words have indeed been a comfort to me, and you have given me some insight as to how matters stand. I should be more comforted, but for the fact that she has not written. It seems so cruel to leave us in such suspense. She was always such a loving child; I cannot help fearing harm from her silence."

"If it is Vivian's affair," said Lady De Vere, "he would know that to write to you would be to betray him to his mother."

"True, true," said the Curate. "God bless you, Lady De Vere, for the comfort you have brought to our aching hearts." He bowed low over the white hand that was put in his, and took his leave.

The same man in shiny black must have been somewhere near, for at the first touch of the bell he was there to conduct Mr. Llewellyn a part of the way out. At the hall he handed him over to the other man, the porter, who, having opened the door, seemed to think that really now he had done something like a day's work.

CHAPTER XV.

MR. LLEWELLYN walked slowly through the park, his tall form slightly bent and leaning heavily on his stick ; now and then he raised it to knock out of his path an acorn or a chesnut, but in his deep thought he was unconscious of the movement. He wondered he had not seen the danger of an attachment between Nelly and the Captain ; and with the thought of their marriage hope came back to his trusting nature. The family at "The Place" might be reconciled in time. His Nelly was fit to grace the coronet of a peeress. Then the old Welsh blood in his veins began to stir itself. His ancestors were princes when the Vaughans were unknown. Still there remained the fact, the great Lady at "The Place" was coldly angry, and would not see him when he waited on Lady De Vere, and he was the Curate of Llansketty. If the absent Rector thought he and his family were the slightest annoyance to Lady Vaughan, he knew he should be dismissed at a short notice, and then what would become of them ? He had very little interest in the Church ; for he had now lived many years at Llansketty, and was forgotten by many of his old friends. His had been a quiet sort of life too, doing pretty much as his Rector and Lady Vaughan wished in all Church matters. He had early been taught to think forms and ceremonies were good for the people, and he went through his duties with reverential care ; but

his simple heart in its love and trust looked straight through the symbols up to the great Father Spirit, so that there was little sympathy between him and his superior; the Rector being an out-and-out Puseyite, such a specimen that good old Dr. Pusey would have been quite astonished at his disciple, if he could have seen him indulging in his clerical capers.

Our Curate went on revolving all these annoyances in his mind. At the churchyard gate Pepper met him. The little doggie was too good a physiognomist to give tongue very loudly in his greeting, but as his master shut the gate he stretched his short little legs as far as he could to the Curate's knee in the hope of a pat, which he got, and the sad apostrophe as well—"Poor Pepper! she has indeed left us; you must trust to your master's care now."

In the parlour the same sorrowful faces met him that he had left there. After he had told his wife and Bessie all he had learned from Lady De Vere, he and John Davies retired into his sanctum to talk the matter over and think what was best to be done. Bessie went about the household matters with Bridget, after having despatched a note to her husband, saying she would remain with her mother for a few days, and asking him to come there when his day's work was done. As for poor Mrs. Llewellyn, she sat crushed by her grief, her hands clasped in her lap, bending backwards and forwards with a slow motion, and from time to time uttering the sad words, "I would sooner have followed her to the grave!"

Though none of them at the cottage doubted it was Vivian who had taken Nelly away, it was necessary to ascertain the fact, and the truth as to where they were married. Mr. Llewellyn's hopeful, upright nature made him put faith in the honour of a Vaughan. He never for a moment supposed his Nelly would go with Vivian unless she was his wife, or that Vivian would wish to lead her into sin ; but John Davies and Mrs. Llewellyn knew more of Captain Vaughan's real character, and they dreaded she might have been imposed on and betrayed.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE sad hours passed on. Tea-time came ; Bessie and Bridget had done their best ; but it would not do. Sorrow had come down with its dark wing and brooded over all. The strange, mysterious sympathy which binds heart to heart had been rudely broken. Quivering in their first pain, the bereaved ones tried to comfort one another, and found their best solace in talking over their plans for tracing the whereabouts of the lost girl. John Davies sat by the side of Mrs. Llewellyn, and during the meal tried to cheer and comfort her by every hope he could think of. He told her what his plans were. He said Mr. Llewellyn had promised to write by the next post to Canada to Sir Harry, telling him of their fears and asking him for the

truth. The Curate insisted on the propriety of telling Lady Vaughan he should write to her son. John Davies seemed to think it was a useless piece of civility, but he let it pass.

"I shall start as soon to-morrow as I can," he said, addressing himself to Mrs. Llewellyn, "for Llandor, and see Mademoiselle Marie, and then go on to Gryfydd, where Lady De Vere's carriage was to have met Nelly; and I will follow that dark brougham and its occupants, either with the help of the police or without it, as may seem best; but I will not give up the search until I find where she has been taken."

The poor mother was too crushed and broken to say more than "Thank ye, John—thank ye," through her tears. Bridget, who was in the room on some errand, looked at him with grateful eyes, and with a great sniff rubbed the tears away with her apron. She also administered a cuff to Pepper, who she thought was taking a mean advantage of the sorrow to get somewhat too large a supper to suit her notions of frugality.

Mr. Morgan sat by Bessie's side, willing to help in any way in his power when he saw he could do so with effect, and he now undertook to transact some matters of business for John Davies while he was away. John had not very much to do, for he had inherited a comfortable independence from a long line of frugal ancestors, and as far as money was concerned would have been a better match for Nelly than the younger son of the grand Vaughans. The old Welsh

blood in his veins had been growing better and purer as it flowed on through generations of kindly, truth-loving hearts ; and John, the last of that gentle race, inherited the best traits of many an honoured ancestor. Unselfish and good as the brightest type of our humanity, he yet possessed an indomitable firmness of character which made him go on unswervingly towards what he considered the right. He loved Nelly Llewellyn and her father with all the love of his soul. If Vivian had married Nelly openly, and taken her to the great house as the beautiful bride of the wealthy and honoured, John would have gone on his quiet way, and to God alone would the secret of his heart have been known ; but Nelly was in danger, and Nelly's father was powerless to save or help her. He could not command the money or the time to follow her betrayer and make him act the part of an honest man. Then John knew if he could obtain certain and good news of her, he could bring back comparative comfort to the Curate's family ; so he made his arrangements as quickly as he could, and was prepared to start on the next day.

John Davies did not find it so difficult as he anticipated to trace the runaways. Vivian, secure in the thought that his family would think Nelly was with Lady De Vere, never contemplated there would be any pursuit after them, and did not take the trouble to assume any disguise. The brougham was hired at a country town near to the station, from a person who believed it was hired for one of the Captain's sisters

who was travelling with him. The driver, when asked, said they went to a village about six miles on, in the direction of the line of railway. He was ordered to stop in a lane before they entered the village. The Captain and the young lady got out there, and walked on, saying they should be back in half-an-hour; and he was to wait for them, which he did, and on their return drove them to the next station, where he was paid and dismissed. His description tallied exactly with Nelly's personal appearance and dress. There could be no doubt, then, with whom she had gone; and after thinking the matter over, John decided to go on to London, and take up his quarters at the hotel he knew Vivian was in the habit of frequenting when in town.

CHAPTER XVII.

It had been raining all day, and when John got out of the train the great terminus looked like some place in Dante's *Inferno*. Fog everywhere wrapped the dingy figures in mist, who seemed through the gloom to be impelled to their work by the evil spirit of machinery. The lamps did not burn like honest lamps that wanted to give a light, but as though they must do it, and so indemnified themselves by beguiling mortals with their false light into those dark cavernous shadows, and doing for them there; and the noise and

hissing and roarings could not be outdone by a world of evil spirits.

John stood in the midst of the damp, din and hubbub, bewildered, and for a moment uncertain what to do ; grasping tight hold of his valise, which seems to be an instinct inherent in all mortal creatures in these times of fast railways. The instinct to hold fast to one's carpet-bag and be pugnacious with porters was an excitement unknown to our ancestors, and surely saved them from much irritability. During the days of the old coach travelling, an irate old gentleman had a chance of arguing on the subject of his wrongs with the guard ; and if there was a prospect of a tip (as the schoolboys say) at the end of the journey, the guard gave in with a wink to some imaginary chum, and a soothing word or two to the passenger ; but the same class of fussy old souls are very badly used now. Nature seems to have made monomaniacs of them on the subject of railway porters, and when they find themselves about to enter or leave a train, all their bristles are stuck up at everybody and everything. They always think they have lost something, which thing they generally find they have been holding so tight that it has given them the cramp, and they do not leave off scolding until pain compels them to let go ; and then they see their mistake, and try to sneak quietly off. But porters, I think, know the class and love a joke ; so down comes a barrow, "By your leave !" and the unfortunates are intercepted in their retreat, and sent spinning in quite

another direction. The warlike spirit is again roused : "I'll have a policeman—I'll—I'll !" gasps out the old person ; but a whistle and scream that is unanswerable takes his breath away, and his enemy is dimly seen in the far-off distance, away, away : the quiet station soothes him ; he gathers up his luggage all right, and perhaps in his home is a very good-natured, pleasant old gentleman after all—one of our modern fogies.

John Davies had his valise only, and that he took into the carriage with him ; so he had no hunting for his luggage in the little pen where the boxes are put, like so many sheep, and are quite as difficult to catch. A cabman was his good fairy, and by the time he was seated in the vehicle he bethought him of an old friend who transacted for him what law business he had ever wanted, and fortunately for John it had been very little. He directed the cabman to Mr. Barker's private residence, which was in one of the streets in the neighbourhood of Oxford Street. Having ascertained his friend was at home, he brought his valise into the hall, dismissed the cab, and prepared to follow towards the dining-room the man-servant whose impassive face expressed no surprise. As far as my experience goes, London servants never *are* surprised. They look upon the world with very Dundreary eyes, and are too used up to excite themselves about anything. The man opened the thick massive door and announced Mr. Davies. The fog had penetrated into the hall and mystified to a certain extent the atmosphere

of the dining-room, which was occupied by one gentleman, who, as he rose and came forward to meet his friend, looked a little doubtful. Then in a cheerful voice of welcome, "Why, Davies, what lucky chance has brought you to town?" glancing at the overcoat. "Just up by the train—you have not dined?" with his hand on the bell. "And, Wakefield," as the man re-entered the room, "tell Mrs. Bell to send up a tray with something for Mr. Davies to eat, and see there is a room got ready."

But at this point in the orders John said, "Thank you, I will accept the dinner, but I do not think I can the bed. While I am taking dinner, I will have a chat with you, and then decide."

The two friends sat with their feet stretched out on the rug before a bright fire, though it was early in the autumn; and the warmth and snugness of the room did much to make them forget the foggy outside. The gas was burning in a handsome chandelier over the dining-table, which had on it the dessert and wine, of which Mr. Barker was partaking when Mr. Davies came in. John told his friend his errand, and said he wanted to become an inmate of the hotel used by Captain Vaughan. It was a private hotel in the neighbourhood of Pall Mall, and John Davies thought they would hesitate about admitting a stranger at that time in the evening without some introduction. He remembered Mr. Barker was solicitor for the United Service Club, and thought he might help him.

"That I can do," Mr. Barker said in answer to his

question. "I am very well known there. As soon as you have dined, we will take a cab and go there and finish the evening ; and by that time you will feel at home."

They chatted for an hour over the business which had brought John Davies so far, and Mr. Barker gave his friend some very useful advice. Then the imperturbable man-servant was ordered to call a cab, which he did without any excitement, going out into the fog with a melancholy aspect, as if he thought the world was in unutterable confusion, and it could not be helped, therefore it was no use to hurry.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A CAB in a fog is not a comfortable conveyance. It smells damp and dirty. The fog outside makes one instinctively shut the windows, and then the odours of its last night's occupants come out in all their unpleasant variety, bad tobacco being the most prominent. John felt this almost as much as a woman would have done ; for though careless of his dress, he was delicately refined in his tastes, and in the hands of an elegant little wife would have developed into a sort of dandy, if it had been her pleasure. He would have given up everything to the woman he loved, but his passion for reading. That I do not think he could have given up while he had life.

John soon put the window down on his side, for fog was better than the close smell, and peered out into the strange scene. An ocean of fog surrounded them. The gas in the street lamps seemed dwindled to a small flame, and so high up, it was difficult to believe they were not in the sky ; and how they got suspended there excited one's wonder. The people, too, and carriages that John at one moment thought far off, the next brushed up against their cab in a most alarming manner.

"It is a dense fog to-night," Mr. Barker said. "I had no idea it was so bad till we came out in it."

"Where are we now?" said John.

"Upon my word, I can't tell," Mr. Barker answered. "Somewhere near the Quadrant, I should think, but it is so thick I cannot see. However, the man will find his way. Had you not better shut the window? Your country lungs will not like breathing such an atmosphere."

"I do not know if my country lungs or my country nose is likely to suffer most ; but truly I am thankful my destiny has made me a countryman, not a clerk, to sit in a dark office in some back street of this Babel, perched on a high stool, doing nearly the same work every day of one's life. I wonder how they feel," he continued, in a musing tone. "We do not know how much there is to be thankful for in our own lot, until we rub up against our fellows."

His attention was called by his companion to some street disturbance. They did not stop, and the night

crowd was soon forgotten, with its mass of suffering creatures—creatures made in the image of a good God, yet breaking every law that He has given them, and bearing in their sad, tortured hearts the fearful penalty of their own wicked disobedience.

The cab with John and his friend soon left the main streets, and after a short drive stopped. There were two carriages waiting at the entrance of the hotel, and at first the coachmen did not seem inclined to move on and make room for the more humble conveyance; but cabs sometimes contained gentlemen of some importance; and obeying street etiquette, they moved slowly forward, far enough to allow the cab to drive up to the steps. It had no sooner stopped than a waiter appeared, who looked rather coldly on John and his valise; but Mr. Barker's voice soon changed the expression of his face.

"A friend of mine, Tom, who will stay at your house."

Tom looked much too grave a gentleman to be addressed by such a familiar cognomen; and he bowed so solemnly in answer, that a stranger from another world might have supposed he was a missionary employed to wait on the heathen. He said a few words to another waiter, who muttered something about No. 10 being unoccupied.

John Davies, who had quick ears, said, "Any room will do for me. Take my luggage there, then, to No. 10;" and the valise and John parted company for the first time that day.

Tom bowed again. "To the coffee-room, gentlemen?" he said, suggestively, and, preceding them, shewed them into one of those comfortable rooms prepared for *mankind*. This was a particularly well-got-up room of the kind, as it was only used by those gentlemen staying in the house and a few outsiders like Mr. Barker. The two friends parted at a late hour—late for John's country habits; but Mr. Barker thought nothing of the hour, or the fog either, which was thicker than ever. There were plenty of waiters to send out into it, and plenty of cabs to be got from somewhere; and the man of the world never troubled his head about the fact that the late hours of the one class make it a necessity for those who serve them to lose so much of their rest that life is shortened by it. It was pleasant for him to sit up late at night. It was also pleasant to have his comforts attended to. Beyond that he did not trouble himself; and yet he was by no means a bad man. His friends thought him a very kind old bachelor; and if the subject had been put before him in its plain painful truth, he would have looked serious, and said, "Yes, truly, it is a bad state of things; but what can one do?"

CHAPTER XIX.

IN the course of the evening, Mr. Barker took an opportunity of seeing Mrs. Wills, the mistress of the

establishment, and told her his friend wanted to have a few minutes' private conversation with her respecting Captain Vaughan and his lady, "who were staying at this house, I think, about three weeks ago," he said. The landlady had nothing to conceal, and answered frankly, "Yes, it is about that time ; but by referring to my books I can ascertain the day." Mr. Barker did not want to give her that trouble, he said, and remained a short time chatting about indifferent matters. Having thus paved the way for John Davies's inquiries, Mr. Barker went back to the coffee-room. He did not want to enter minutely into the subject ; but thought if the landlady knew it was his wish as well as his friend's to get all the information that could be given, she would take more pains to remember facts.

The next morning, after breakfast, John Davies asked for Mrs. Wills, and was shewn into her private sitting-room. She was a well-dressed, energetic-looking woman, and seemed slightly put out by having her time taken up by matters that did not concern her ; but John had a kind, gentlemanly way of his own that did much to disarm irritability ; and as he had determined to tell the simple facts of the case as far as it was necessary for procuring the information he wanted, he had no need to be prolix and detain her long. He told her Captain Vaughan had eloped with a young lady whom it was necessary for him to see, and she would greatly oblige him and Mr. Barker if she could give them the information they wanted : he said a few

words about the sorrow in the Curate's family, and soon succeeded in touching her womanly heart and interesting her in the subject. Captain Vaughan, too, had much annoyed her in his last stay at her house, which made her the more disposed to tell John all she knew.

John said, "I believe Captain Vaughan is now in Canada, and what I want to know is, if his wife went with him." At the word "wife," John's voice, in spite of himself, quivered a little. Mrs. Wills, mistaking the meaning of the tone, looked significantly at him and said, "Ah! poor young lady, she is in the hands of a bad man, I am afraid. Of all the military gentlemen who come here, and I have a great many of them, he is the most unprincipled. Many of his brother officers do all they can in a quiet way to cut him. We see a great deal of the by-play of life, and hear their servants talk."

John looked grieved and surprised as she went on; then he said, "He could not surely have treated her badly, so soon, in your house."

"Treated her badly," said Mrs. Wills; "that depends on how you look at it. He was all honey and sugar in his words and actions; but they were only here two or three days, and the third night of their stay he was brought home drunk from a gambling-house at two o'clock in the morning. It was all his companions could do to save him from being taken to the police station. I shall never forget the poor young lady's face the next morning, so white and sad. She had

kept watch by the drunkard's side all night, God help her!" John Davies sat perfectly still and motionless; he had not words at the moment fit for a stranger's ear to express what he felt. Then he said in a doubtful tone, as though he could hardly believe what he heard, "Captain Vaughan was always considered a gentleman; he was the favourite, too, of his mother and sisters. I have heard through village gossip that he sometimes forgot himself; but I always thought it might have been more from accident than habit, a vice indulged in with men, not displayed before innocent women to insult and degrade them."

"Intimate friends very often know little of the life of such men," Mrs. Wills answered. "I have no doubt he could be a perfect gentleman in manners at home, and, when it suited him, anywhere else. He knows something of the other end of the scale, too, or I am very much mistaken." She added, "Sir Harry is as bad a man, perhaps worse, only he is not a drunkard; and what he does, he does in cold blood. I intended to have told Captain Vaughan I could not have such scenes repeated here; it would ruin the character of my house; but as they left the next morning, I said nothing about it."

"You are sure they have gone to Canada?" John said.

"Yes, to Quebec; his man told me so. Also, by way of apology for his master's conduct, he told me he thought the Captain had got into a terrible fix by running away with the young lady."

John's brow grew dark, but he remained silent.

Mrs. Wills continued: "He brought two or three gentlemen home to dine with him the evening before he left. Tom heard him tell Mrs. Vaughan he should not have done so, only they met him, and said they would come; so he could not help it. It was with them he went to the gambling-house. I know them by sight quite well, and their companionship is no credit to any one. When Mrs. Vaughan heard they were coming to dinner, she seemed ready to cry; but, Tom being in the room, she said nothing. She left the dinner-table as soon as she could, and shut herself in her own room for the rest of the evening. They left the next morning to go on board ship, so I saw very little more of her."

"Gambler and drunkard!" John muttered between his teeth.

"You may well pity her," Mrs. Wills said: "there is not much hope for her, whether she is married to him or not."

The truth was so much worse than John had thought possible, that he sat mute with sorrow, feeling how impossible it was for him to help her or save her. The doubt expressed in Mrs. Wills' last words caught his ear. "What makes you think they are not married?" he said hastily. "Nelly—Mrs. Vaughan—would not have stayed with him an hour if she had not thought she was his wife. They must have been married before they left Wales."

"Well, all I can say is this: the man-servant told

me he believed the Captain had deceived the young lady ; for he knew his master could not say at home he had married the Curate's daughter. I know," Mrs. Wills continued, "Captain Vaughan dare not brave his mother's anger ; for he is over head and ears in debt, as the saying is."

"What *will* become of her?" John said, half aloud. "Poor Nelly !"

Once set talking, Mrs. Wills evidently enjoyed telling all she could, and continued : "Sir Harry paid his brother's debts once ; it was the only kind thing I ever heard of his doing ; and twice before that, Lady Vaughan got him out of trouble. Lady Vaughan has no town house, and always comes here when business brings her to London in a hurry, and on both those occasions she was here and took her son Vivian away with her. Before he applied to his mother, he was so dunned by his creditors, he asked my husband to lend him money, and ran up a long bill by staying here. That is how I know so much of their affairs."

John Davies seemed scarcely to hear what she was last saying ; his whole soul was absorbed in the one dreadful thought—Nelly heart-broken, ruined, betrayed, perhaps left in a foreign country to die neglected and alone ! He roused himself in a few moments, thanked Mrs. Wills for her kindness, said he should stay a few days longer at the hotel, and then went out to seek his friend Mr. Barker. He changed his mind, however, when he got out into the streets ; for the morning thickness of atmosphere was clearing

away, and the day promised to develop itself into positive sunshine. He made his way to Kensington Gardens. Sauntering among the fine old trees, and finding a spot where few passers-by disturbed him, he stretched his long legs on a seat and gave way to busy thoughts.

CHAPTER XX.

ONCE or twice since he had set out from Llansketty, the feeling had come over him that his journey was somewhat Quixotic. Nelly was the wife of Vivian Vaughan, had become so with her own consent ; and it was only when he remembered the Curate's grief, and from her silence the uncertainty of Nelly's fate, that he put aside his doubts and persevered on his course. Now, after his conversation with Mrs. Wills, he would hesitate no more ; for her father and mother's sake, Nelly must be found, if not for his own heart's content. He would see her, talk to her, and carry back what comfort he could to the poor old couple at Llansketty. If the villain had taken her abroad to betray her—and that thought strangely haunted John Davies's brain, and made him clench his teeth and clasp his stick more tightly—then he should be in the right place to help and save her.

The determination of our course wonderfully quickens our movements. John got up from his reclining

position, and stepping out with country strides got over the ground amazingly fast. In one of the broad walks he nearly stepped over two swells (as the boys say), so well dressed that they made the benevolent quite uncomfortable lest any harm should come to them, they looked so helpless in their large garments and tiny boots and marvellously fitting gloves. I wonder how such boots and gloves would feel on a hot-wind day in Australia. The swell is not indigenous to South Australia: they get an imported one sometimes; but, planted in the bush, the specimen fades and dies, or changes its characteristic. The swell cannot live alone; he must have a tailor to match; so I trust, if any of the dear, well-got-up creatures read these lines, they will take warning. John Davies in his hurry stepped over (so to speak) two of these little gentlemen, who with eye-glasses surveyed the *monstar*. In avoiding them, John knocked himself against a post. Regardless of his own discomfort, he turned and said in his good-tempered way, "I hope I have not hurt you," and passed on.

"What a wemarkable countwy cweature!" the fairer of the two said, as nearly betrayed into astonishment as he could allow himself to be. "Gweat awkward bwute!" his friend replied, setting his eye-glass and looking after the retreating figure as though it was some specimen in zoology. The "gweat bwute," however, had turned the corner, and was out of their sight and their world.

John went on to the office for the Canadian line of

packets, and having ascertained he could sail in a few days for Quebec, took his berth, and returned to his hotel to settle business matters and write letters. On his way home he called on Mr. Barker, who promised to dine with him and talk his affairs over.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE little dinner was perfect ; for John wisely left it to Mrs. Wills to order, and Tom carried out her wishes with an intuitive knowledge of the art of feeding that was very agreeable to the parties partaking of the meal ; it went far towards making Mr. Barker radiant with good-temper and very chatty. He wondered greatly that John Davies should leave his pleasant home and put himself to so much expense and trouble for the Curate's family ; but it was not his business to interfere. So he said nothing of his surprise, but gladly undertook to see after John's property and remit him money to the places he named. While toying with his olives and burgundy, he said, "Then you leave by the 'Sea Star' on Saturday next?"

"Yes," John answered ; and referring to his companion's looks more than his words, continued : "I dare say you are astonished at my going so far for a friend ; but every member of Mr. Llewellyn's family is very dear to me. I have no relations of my own

living, and since I was a boy the Curate's home has been mine, whenever I like to make it so, which was very often." He said the last words with a sad smile. "Then," he continued, "anything that breaks into my reading habits, my rather self-indulgent life, will rouse me and do me good. I am conscious that I want it. I have not been able before to make the plunge into the world, of which I know so little. I was too happy in my dreamy country life until the charm was rudely broken." He stopped short and coloured slightly, as though he feared he had said more than he wished.

Mr. Barker was too much a man of the world to let it be seen that he noticed his friend's slight discomfiture. He said, holding his wine up to the light, "I think you are right about seeing the world: every man ought to see as much of it as he can."

"Yes," John answered, "and perhaps, having once begun to wander, it may be a long time before I settle down again."

"You will not have very much time on your hands," Mr. Barker continued, "before you sail. There are always so many little travelling comforts to think of. I will take you to-morrow morning to a capital house for that kind of thing, where you can not only get everything you may want, but, if they know what country you are going to, they will do the thinking for you as well. The people in those outfitting houses are the most suggestive creatures in the world. They have so many delightful little arrangements for saving trouble and adding to comfort, that I always long to

travel when I go with a friend and look about me in their places."

"I shall put myself in your tailor's hands, then, and what with him and your outfitter, I shall come out 'quite a new cweature,' I suppose," John said, laughing, and imitating the drawl of some of the young fops he had met in the coffee-room.

They parted early in the evening, for John had some letters to write. He had sent one by the evening mail for Mr. Llewellyn. He posted it early, in the hope he might get an answer before he sailed. In his letter he told Mr. Llewellyn he had ascertained Nelly had gone on with Captain Vaughan to Canada, and he should not return to Llansketty until he had seen and spoken to her and found out the reason of her silence. "Do not think anything of the journey for me," he added, after having given them all the information he could about their child. "It will do me a great deal of good. I have long wanted to see something of America, and this will be a fine opportunity for me to do so." Good-hearted John! he did not want the poor father to feel the weight of his obligation more than he could help. If Nelly could have contrasted her two lovers now! But experience often comes too late for anything but bitter sorrow. If that sorrow brings repentance, it has done its work, and leads us onwards to live for the future, where there is another life, another home. Kind hearts have gone before us, and sweet and bitter memories beckon to us to follow onwards after them; and that thought

is often all that our follies leave to us. We throw away the golden opportunities that are given of passing through the discipline of life happily, and then find fault with Providence. After a while we bend our aching hearts to endure the burden we have ourselves imposed, and through His mercy are enabled to look up to the sunlight beyond.

The "Sea Star" was to drop down the river with the night tide, so the passengers had to be on board early in the evening. They were a motley group. First and foremost were the Yankees, with enormously loose garments and small dried-up bodies in them, so small that one wondered how much was left of the inner man. Two or three Englishmen, in the comfortable undress of the present sensible fashions, lounged about the door of the saloon, and looked as if they belonged to that happy class who have time and money to indulge their love of field sports, and cultivate health and good-temper among nature's pleasant handiworks at pleasant times of the year. These, perhaps having somewhat exhausted the old country, were in search of more racy sports in a new one. All of them being more or less tall and stalwart, looked like amiable giants by the side of the few small specimens of Yankeedom, whose restless activity they watched with a placid sort of wonder. There were a few ladies seen now and then at the far end of the saloon ; but most of the lady passengers were engaged in setting their berths to rights, and did not appear.

John Davies was nearly the last from shore. He

had waited for the evening post to get his letters from Mr. Llewellyn. As soon as he came on board he got a waiter to stow his portmanteau in his berth, and then found himself in the unenviable situation of a shy man with nothing to do and no one to talk to. His clothes, too, were new, which fact was a decided worry to John; though perhaps had he known how much better he looked in them, it would have gone far to reconcile him to their uncomfortableness. Mr. Barker had said to him, "You don't do yourself justice; come to my tailor;" and the result had been amazingly in John's favour. Still, everything was strange and not quite comfortable. The cabin he occupied had only a second berth in it; notwithstanding, John wondered how two of them were to move about in it. The other occupant had evidently taken possession; for at the foot of the mattress was carefully stowed a violin-case; a nest or sea-bag that looked like an old traveller hung above it, from the pockets of which stuck out the ends of many things: some very brown short pipes and a half-finished bundle of cigars: a lot of unhemmed silk handkerchiefs were stuffed in one compartment so tight that the ends were hanging out and raveling out; there were also some coils of catgut and a large piece of rosin. On the bed were thrown two very handsome railway rugs, and a pair of slippers, costly in their material and beautifully worked, evidently from the hands of a lady. John surveyed the arrangements of his neighbour by the light of the dim swinging lamp, sitting on the side of

the bunk with an amused expression of face, and began to speculate on the manner of man he was likely to turn out ; but as the stranger did not seem inclined to turn in, John got tired of that, and thought he would go and look about him.

They were still in smooth water, and the carpet and curtains that give the saloon such a comfortable look had not yet disappeared. John thought how very elegantly they fit up these places. He found the slight motion awkward, but succeeded in getting on deck without upsetting himself or any one else. Once there, he was more comfortable : he could remain in the dark if he liked, and study the characters of his companions more at his ease ; for the only lights were those at the prow and stern, and the light at the binnacle. The ends of the cigars looked like fire-flies all over the deck, but they threw no light around them ; and the night was cloudy and dark, with the wind rising. It would be dirty weather outside, the captain said ; and I do not see why he should not be laughed at as much as the old city gentleman, who, as he was sailing down the river towards the Nore, asked, "if round the corner was the way to India" !

A mizzling rain set in, and John returned below to his cabin. He had not had time to read Mr. Llewellyn's letter, and thought this would be a good opportunity. The letter was written in very bad spirits. The Curate told John his only hope was in his friendship and perseverance. He said he had seen Lady Vaughan, and she utterly denied the possibility of Vivian having

married Nelly. She had received letters, she said, both from Vivian and Sir Harry, and they neither of them spoke of or referred to Nelly in the slightest way. "So you see," continued the father, "what our position is. Can my pure-hearted child have wilfully dishonoured me? God forbid! I will not think that of her for a moment. Oh! my friend, seek her out and bring her back to me, and we will lay our broken hearts together in the grave." He went on to say he had received notice from the Rector that another Curate would be appointed to his place, whose opinions on Church matters were more suitable to his, the Rector's, views; and Mr. Llewellyn was to hold himself prepared to quit Llansketty in a few months. The poor old man made light of that. It was nothing compared to the loss of his child.

John Davies read the letter slowly through, and folded it as slowly. The dark look of anger came over his brow that it wore when he met Mrs. Llewellyn coming from Lady Vaughan's with the news that Nelly was gone. He sat perfectly still for a time; then he prepared to turn in—yes, and to sleep; for he was blessed with a good constitution, and the activity of his days made sleep refreshing to him. The strong man had a child's simple trust in his heavenly Father's care. He would do his best, and leave the results in better hands; and so a peace surpassing anything a godless man can know enwrapped his soul, and made him happy in the midst of his sorrow. John's religion was a part of his inner life. Very few

people thought about it ; for John never spoke of it ; and as loud protestations and solemn faces are generally accepted as evidences of piety, the world that knew him fancied him rather irreligious than otherwise.

CHAPTER XXII.

JOHN slept the deep quiet sleep of health and trust. He was roused often during the night, though not awakened, by many noises, not the least of which was the snoring and groaning of his fellow-passenger ; but all other sounds were forgotten in the uproar that began just as the day was breaking. For some time it did not rouse the other sleeper ; but when it did, John heard the words, " Confound them for the greatest nuisances on earth or sea ! " The voice continued to growl out its annoyances in a sleepy tone : " It is no use trying to sleep now, with holy-stoning overhead : one may just as well turn out and have a smoke. " John peeped over the side of his berth on to the one underneath him, and saw two legs encased in loose grey-worsted stockings, dangling backwards and forwards. The body belonging to the legs was lost to sight in the interior of the bunk ; but it must have been doubled nearly flat, for a head with a red night-cap on it came out just above the knees, and from the head the grumbling sounds proceeded. " Ah, ah, yar ! " yawned the speaker, and muttered to himself,

"What a take-in life is to a poor devil like me!—no peace anywhere; debts on shore, and stomach at sea plaguing one! It is all very fine to sing about 'Life on the ocean wave.' I wish those sublime asses who encored me were here now." After a pause, "It isn't a bad song, though," he said, cheering up and rolling out in a fine deep bass voice, "Life on the ocean wave." Then he stopped suddenly, thinking perhaps there were many to hear him, and squeezed himself quite out of his bunk, and stood upright on the floor of the cabin. It was but for a moment; a large wave lifted the ship and pitched the singer into the opposite corner. John fairly laughed outright as he saw the discomfited little man, who was holding on to the washstand, and looked, could he have let go, as if he would have shied the soap at John's head. He was a very queer mortal, with broad shoulders and short legs, his head large and hair grey, cut in the fashion Jullien used to adopt. Nature had not given him whiskers, but all the necessary hair for them must have gone to make his moustache. His pitch across the cabin had sent his cap on one side, and he was vainly fishing for a dropped slipper with one foot, the motion of the wave slowly taking it one way, and he trying to bring it the other. "Come out and see if you would like it," he said, twisting his moustache, "grinning up there." But he looked so ridiculous, John lay back and shook with laughter. "Well," he continued, "it's no use getting in a rage with a fellow that laughs like that."

"I did not mean to laugh at you," John said, in a kindly voice; "but when I first awoke and saw you, I could not help it;" and he nearly went off again as the odd little man looked up at him with queer grey bloodshot eyes, from which nearly all expression had been taken by much brandy.

"Well," the individual uttered again, still holding on fast by the washstand, and looking furtively after the slipper, which was quietly disappearing under the bunk, "suppose we introduce ourselves. I am Mr. Squarey at your service; and your name?"

"Is Davies," said John.

"Well, then, Mr. Davies, if I were you, I should put my head out at the port and smoke a pipe. If I had been fortunate enough to secure that top berth, that's what I should be doing."

"Smoking is not allowed below, is it?" said John.
"And if it were, I should not care to smoke here."

"Ah! there's the difference," said Mr. Squarey; "I should: and as to being allowed, I always do what I like till I am found out. They have stopped that witch's noise overhead—holy-stoning indeed! So I think I'll turn in again; for we shall not have breakfast till nine." And letting go the washstand, he seemed to go with one jerk into his bunk.

John lay for some time, and then he turned out and began to dress himself as well as he could. There was a heavy sea on, and it was almost impossible to stand without holding, so that dressing was no joke. John's efforts seemed to revive Mr. Squarey. His

bed-place was not high enough to admit of his sitting up; but with his blankets and pillow bundled up together, he managed to make a rest for his elbow, and lay there leisurely watching John's attempts, and commenting thus: "I am glad to see those long legs of yours are not more handy than mine proved to be," said he, stretching out one of the members in question and surveying it with a great deal of satisfaction. "There goes the other slipper. Bother this rolling sea!" And he swayed himself some way out, and looked after his property sliding quietly away. "Madame would be disgusted with me if she knew where her precious piece of work had gone,—to the lee scuppers in point of fact. I think I see myself telling her that!" he said, with his queer little elfish grey eyes twinkling with fun.

"The lady in question would not be likely to make you another pair, I should say," laughed John, as he was trying to tie his cravat; but the bow was not easily made to his satisfaction, for he slipped across the cabin twice during the operation.

"No," said Mr. Squarey, meditatively—"No: we did some starring work together. It pays better than staying in one place always, and we got on famously; and those slippers," looking after them with a twist of his moustache, "were the result of her affection."

John by this time had finished his neck-tie, and was rummaging in his box for a loose morning coat. He was not a tidy man, and always dived to the bottom of places for what he wanted. If the article

happened to be at the top, the result was not satisfactory ; but John made it all right by main strength, jamming things in and shutting them up.

Mr. Squarey looked with sympathizing interest on John's movements. "I suppose you have found out by this time I belong to the musical profession," said he.

"Yes, I guessed as much," John answered.

"It is not a bad way of getting one's living, if you *must* work for it," Mr. Squarey continued. "The colonies are rich and pay well, and the wandering life is good fun. Lor', what queer people and queer places I've seen !" And the little elf-like mortal chuckled under his blankets, nothing of him being visible but one grey leg swinging over the side of the bunk, and a heap of bed-clothes, from the middle of which appeared the merry, cynical face surmounted by the red nightcap.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A **HEAVY** sea, a rolling ship, and a stomach accustomed to all the soothing influences of a pleasant breakfast-room, to begin the day with, are things that don't anastomose (as the doctors say); and John, having finished his toilet, found it so. He did not fare much better than his companion in his attempts at walking. I don't know what is the best-shaped body

to have under the circumstances—a short one or a tall one, a round one or a thin one. Take it any way, the sea makes most uneasy arrangements for those misguided mortals who trust themselves on her bosom. “The bosom of the ocean,” and “cradled on the mighty deep,” touch those chords in our memory that refer to very pleasant baby illusions; but the real facts of the case bring vividly before the mind’s eye after-dinner scenes in the green island when the whisky has been potent and the heads weak.

The neophyte at sea, knowing by tradition that it is difficult to walk, stiffens himself against all but an upright position. The first resolute step he makes, the deck seems to go from under him; and, thinking the next shall be a success at any rate, he is met by an upheaving of the same unreasonable planks which is sure to bump him up or down against somebody or thing. John had felt the unnaturalness of his position in his cabin, and when he opened his door to come into the saloon stepped boldly out. Before he was aware, he tumbled against and upset one of the trim little Yankees, a Major Moses Jaalam, just fresh from his toilet, and evidently in his own opinion quite a lady-killer. The scion of liberty made a fine example of the force of gravitation. John saw him, for a moment in a sitting posture, and then he slid under the table and came up on the other side of the saloon, with his back against the panels of a cabin-door, where he appeared to stick fast, foaming over with rage. A general titter went round. Some of the

men bolted on to the deck to have their laugh out there, and John Davies among them. The Major said to the ladies near him, "If that long-legged son of a Britisher had done it, and not the sea, he would have got sum licks as sure ez eggs ez eggs." To John himself he said nothing; only gave him a wide berth when they came in contact, as though he thought him a slippery customer. But in a few days John had made friends with almost all in the cuddy, even Major Moses and the ladies. Indeed, Nelly would hardly have known shambling John, as she used to call him, now his fine manly figure was not caricatured by a country tailor. His kindly nature made him gentlemanly, and enabled him to overcome his *mauvaise honte*; for he was quick to perceive what gave pleasure to others. Young Mrs. Jaalam, the Major's strong-minded wife, evidently thought him charming, and caused John much inconvenience by getting in his way very often. He had not left off his old habit of lolling about, and his long legs were very much in people's way. Mrs. Jaalam would trip over them, and then John would get up in some confusion and offer her his seat. "No, she would not take that; but she would like a walk." So John had to offer his arm to steady her, and she would keep him walking and talking till he began to pity the Major, and bless his lucky stars the American beauty at any rate was not his wife.

The voyage on the whole was a pleasant one to John, and he made some friendships before they left

the rough ocean and steamed up the majestic river of St. Lawrence. Though on every side there was so much to interest him, curiosity gave way to the one absorbing passion of his soul. He flattered himself that he had subdued every feeling but friendship for Nelly,—that he was seeking her for her father's sake ; but the feverish longing with which he looked forward to the landing in the country where she was, might have warned him, if he had been given to analyze his feelings ; but that he had never done.

CHAPTER XXIV.

JOHN was still young. He had always looked much older than he really was. His reading habits from a boy and shy country manners, with his unusual height, made people add years to his age when speaking of him ; and now, though five-and-twenty, and only nine years older than Nelly, he seemed to have been her friend and protector for a life-time. From the years when Nelly could just run alone, she had singled out John to share her joys and her sorrows. It was he who lay on the rug with her on the cosy winter evenings, and read one story more by the fire-light before she went to bed. It was he who taught her to kiss prettily and pout her lips and walk like Lady Vaughan. And he was perfectly charmed when he saw the suc-

cess of the little mimic. When she went to the French school, the birth-day box was sure to be half-full of John's presents, and always directed and carefully sent by John himself. Then came the return from school, and the almost idolizing admiration her beauty inspired. With that, the fear also that she would not love him. After a few months of indecision and pain that aged him more than all his previous habits had done, the fact became apparent to him that she loved Vivian Vaughan; and he knew *where* she loved, it would be with her whole soul. He made no outward sign of sorrow, but he read more than ever, and seemed to plunge heart and soul into the religious questions of the day. As he now stood with folded arms leaning over the stern of the ship and watching the water as it foamed and seethed beneath, his thoughts had gone back to an hour, years ago, he remembered with Nelly, when she was playing among the graves in the churchyard, and picking up the acorns for tea-things, and making him do all her behests, because she was his little wife. John's eyes grew dreamy and lost to the things around him; but he could see the wicket-gate and the oak-tree, and the sunlight as it danced and flickered around them, tinting with its golden rays the beautiful hair of the child so busy in her work of innocent love. The words broke from his lips, "My God, I would that she had died then!" He started up from his recumbent position, horror-stricken at his own thought.

They were nearing the busy city, with its bold

headlands, and John was roused from his reverie by the necessity of preparing for landing. He joined the party of English sportsmen, with whom he had become very friendly ; and as they were going to remain at Quebec for a time, they determined to go to an hotel together.

On shore, as on sea, the Yankees were the first and most bustling ; but they might have taken matters quietly, for there were vehicles for all, enough and to spare. Indeed, the difficulty to get one in peace, and make a swarm of the drivers of others believe you did not want them, was quite as great a nuisance at Quebec, John found, as it could possibly be even in Dublin, for Irishmen seem to take to car-driving by instinct ; and there was a good mixture of them among the crowd of applicants who pressed their conveyances on the new arrivals.

Mr. Squarey had, in his professional capacity, visited Quebec before ; and he told John Davies of an hotel, on the way going on to the suburb of St. Rock, very much frequented by officers and gentlemen ; and John and his new friends prepared to go there. Mr. Squarey said he should go to a house patronized by sea-captains, as it would suit his pocket better. John himself had not much luggage, but his companions had, in the shape of guns and fishing tackle, dressing-cases, portmanteaus, and all the lumber an Englishman carries about with him. There is one good thing connected with it—he must have a man-servant ; and that to a lazy body is a great comfort, besides the

advantage of two men being provided for, instead of one, out of the same income.

A Mr. Mortmain shared the carriage with John. He was a good-tempered fellow, who seemed to think life had been given him that he might do as much fishing, hunting, dining and smoking, in the first and best years of it, as he could. He had an indefinite intention, some day, of settling down in the old home and asking the parson to dinner. Thus he proposed to make his peace with Heaven, and be buried in the family vault; but he was young now, and so he went in for hunting, you know, and that sort of thing. His man-servant, in outward appearance, was very like a curate, only dressed in better black; *his* business was to look after his master and his luggage. Having settled the gun-case as he thought best, he shut the door, touched his hat, and seated himself by the side of the driver, prepared to grumble, with or without cause, at everything and everybody. They passed along up the narrow, rugged streets, first among the water-side population, composed of the all sorts that make up that phase of life, stalwart-looking men and squalid women. Upward and onward they went, the poor horses doing their best amid blows and curses. As they neared the upper town, every better sort of house seemed to have an interest for John. "*She* might be there;" and many a bright-eyed girl, seen for a moment as they passed, made his heart flutter. But Mr. Mortmain's man-servant had no such weakness; he was on the look-out for the

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hotel and its comforts ; and on their arrival secured two comfortable rooms, one for his master, and one also for Mr. Davies, who had purchased his civility by sundry fees.

CHAPTER XXV.

It was evening before they got settled in their hotel. Then there was dinner, and after that John scarcely knew what to do with himself. The streets were not lighted ; there was therefore little temptation to a stranger to ramble out. There was a good billiard-table in the house, and one by one the party dropped off to it and to the coffee-room. John was no billiard-player ; reading men seldom are ; though why they should not be, is one of the unsolved mysteries, like the law that it is not proper for a lady to go to church in a hat : so one would think there must be something religious about a spoon bonnet, and something antagonistic to reading in billiards. However, John, though not a player, went to watch and look about him.

When he entered the room with some of his fellow-passengers, there were already others beside the players standing about and looking on. The game was in that position, that the next stroke, if successful, would give the player such an advantage, that his antagonist would scarcely be able to make headway against the score. But the point had not yet been made,

and the player stood with the cue poised, and all the excitement of the moment beaming from his eyes. He was a young, handsome man, in the undress of a military officer. There was a moment of suspense ; then the cue just touched a ball, which, glancing off at the right angle, seemed with a soft tap to hint to another ball they must go together, and the point was won. The player was not an old hand, hardened and impassive ; he could not repress his delight. "I learnt that," he said, "by looking at Vaughan's play."

"Did you? You might have learnt a great many things from him, I dare say," his friend replied, with a slight shrug and sneer. The former speaker laughed a low musical laugh ; but the sound was very expressive of contempt for the person spoken of.

The game was finished, and they stood apart to let others take the table. The movement placed John very near them. The young man who had won the game resumed the conversation with his friend in a rather low tone of voice, but not so low but that John's excited senses caught every word.

"I am told," he said, "Captain Vaughan has left that lovely girl that he brought with him—the lady that is called Mrs. Vaughan. Her cards have his name." He paused, and his honest young face glowed with indignation as he said, "Well, I am bad enough ; but I would not do such a villain's trick as that to be commander-in-chief of the world."

"I should think not," his friend replied. He was a mild, gentlemanly-looking man ; but he coloured with

anger when he answered, "Captain Vaughan is a disgrace to us. I wonder the fellows in his regiment don't try to get rid of him."

"And yet a scamp like that," said the first speaker, "from sheer good luck, has got the chance of helping the old Turks, and giving those precious Muscovites a drubbing. His regiment is one of those ordered to the East."

John made a movement which placed him near them, and, with a few words of apology for the intrusion, said to the elder of the two, "You will greatly oblige me if you can give me any information about Captain Vaughan. I came from England for the purpose of seeing him."

The person addressed looked at John for a moment with a searching glance, and then, as though the survey pleased him, answered, "You are too late then. Captain Vaughan left this a week ago to join his regiment. He will be half way to England by this time."

John paused a second in painful doubt; then said in an earnest, suppressed voice, "I must trouble you with one more question. Has Mrs. Vaughan gone with him, do you know, or does she remain behind?"

"Mrs. Vaughan?" the stranger said.

"Yes, Mrs. Vaughan," John answered quickly; "can you tell me where to find her?"

The younger of the two officers was going to speak, when his friend by a look seemed to silence him. Then turning to John, he said, "I think I can give you some idea as to where she may be found; but

this is not a place to talk of such matters. Come to my quarters ; they are not far off ; and I will tell you all I know of the young lady."

A pang shot through John's heart at the thought of Nelly being the subject of conversation with men of that class ; but he did not know where else to go for information ; so he bowed his thanks and prepared to follow.

As they walked on together, John learnt his companions were a Major Cornwall and Lieutenant Douglas. The Major soon found out enough of John's home and reasons for visiting Canada to convince him he had a gentleman to deal with, and being a single man he had no scruples in asking a stranger to accept his hospitality. They walked on, chatting in the bright starlight on the well-made military road leading to the barracks. After a short time they came to a gate with a sentry pacing before it. He saluted the Major, whose quarters were on the side of the square opposite to that by which they entered.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THERE had been a large picnic given by the officers just after Captain Vaughan and his wife arrived, and Nelly's beauty and shy, reserved manners had made her the observed of all. The party was too large for many introductions, and friends kept to their own

select circles ; so that Nelly passed the day principally in the company of her husband and two or three of his intimate friends, men who were classed as doubtful by the respectable fathers of families. Major Cornwall, not having much to amuse him, had watched with peculiar interest the beautiful young wife. He knew her husband to be what even fast men would call "a great scamp," a bad fellow, and therefore he did not wonder at the sad expression that had settled on the young face ; but he was surprised to see how little attention Captain Vaughan paid her, leaving her almost entirely to the care of his friends. Poor Nelly ! she had found out that her husband already regretted the sacrifices he must make for her, and angry words had more than once passed between them. He had told her in his passion that she had no proof of their marriage. When she reminded him how short a distance it was from her home where her marriage had taken place, he sneeringly said, "The priest who read the service was a college chum of mine, who was willing to do my bidding for a twenty-pound note. His brother, the real incumbent, was away on a visit, and he was doing duty for him, before going to Australia. You don't even know his name," he had drawled out in a drunken voice, "and the book in which we signed our names had a loose sheet. Ha ! ha ! I brought that away. I was not going to leave it in any one's power to tell my mother of my precious folly. You must wait my time, Mrs. Vaughan, to be introduced as my wife to my family. I should not have taken

the trouble to tell you all this, but to let you know what your position is."

Nelly had listened to these words in her cabin on her voyage in mute despair; but as her husband at the time had taken a great deal too much wine, she made him no answer. The next day he seemed to have forgotten it, and was as loving and exacting as ever. But Nelly could not forget they had been said, and a horrible doubt seemed to creep over her, and made her shrink from all companionship. It was with this hidden sorrow at her heart that she landed in Canada. She would not have been at the picnic but by Vivian's commands; for he gave her very plainly to understand he was bored by her gloomy face. She had come to the picnic determined to please him and be as cheerful as she could, but she shrank from the bold attentions of his friends. Major Cornwall noticed much that day which made him often think of the young wife. He was a thoroughly good man, soldier and gentleman, and he was also an observant man of the world. Some early sorrow had touched him, and made him quick to feel for others; and when he saw the suppressed pain in John's face as he asked for Mrs. Vaughan in the billiard-room, all his interest in her revived, and he guessed John to be a near friend of hers. So he had said, "Come to my quarters, and I will tell you all I know."

CHAPTER XXVII.

MAJOR CORNWALL'S room could not boast of much that was luxurious, though a glance around would tell you something of the habits of the man. The necessary furniture was plain and inexpensive, except that in a corner was a bamboo chair from India, of most comfortable construction, and near it a reading-stand with wax lights. On the opposite side of the room there was a handsome piano and music-stand filled with new music. Above that were arranged many pipes of a variety of patterns, and brought from various countries, and on the sofa was thrown a magnificent fur railway wrapper. The Major welcomed John with hospitable kindness, and gave him much information about both Captain Vaughan and Sir Harry.

"Then you think," said John, after a pause in the conversation, "I shall find Mrs. Vaughan to-morrow at the house you speak of, where they have been living."

"Yes, I have every reason to think so; she was there only a few days ago, I know; for I saw her as I rode past. You cannot mistake the house. It stands back about a mile from this, on the St. Rock road, and the creeping plants have been beautifully trained among the rocks which jut out on the ground that forms the garden. It is the prettiest place on that side of the city. Trust Vaughan for that, if he had to live there!"

"And if I want to see Sir Harry, where can I find

him? Mr. Douglas tells me he is in Quebec," John said.

"He has been here only a few days, I think," the Major said; "but he has a house near to the old Jesuits' College, and comes in from his country sports now and then."

John thanked his host heartily, and rose to go. Wishing him good night, the Major said, "Command my services if I can be of any use to the unhappy young lady. I cannot help fearing you have a bad, unprincipled man to deal with in Sir Harry."

John retraced his way to his hotel, and when he arrived there found it later than he thought. Most of the inmates had gone to their rooms. There were only two or three night waiters about, and Mr. Mortmain standing on the steps smoking a cigar and teasing a half-witted man, one-half negro, with a dash of the Yankee. Just as John came up, Mortmain was saying, "Don't be in such a hurry to go. Didn't I say I would give you some dollars if you would stay and enlighten my benighted mind touching your country?"

"I don't want to touch none o' you Britishers; ye air no good; ye air not." He sat down on the steps at Mortmain's feet, however, and looked up into the fresh, ruddy face of the Englishman, who was leaning against a pillar. Taking his cigar from his mouth, Mortmain said, "Why are we no good?"

"Ez I'm a livin' creatur, I know somethin'," the man said, glancing up at Mortmain for an instant;

and then, looking down and nodding his head, he continued, muttering to himself, "Some one on you's dun thet you'll hev tu pay fer wen you gits tu t'other warld, war sum ses we be holl goin' tu."

"What's your name, my small specimen of American humanity?" Mortmain said.

"I don't know nofin 'bout humanty. Lor', how fond you rich Britishers are of callen names! I's a portar, an' funder, I'm Mr. Cephas Billins."

Mr. Cephas Billins, as he sat at Mortmain's feet, looked very much like a dried monkey: his body was wonderfully small and twisted for a living, active man, and he had accounted for it to Mortmain by saying, "'Twas licks as put him out o' jint, an' made sech a pooty figger on him."

At that moment John came up the steps and joined them. He took out his cigar-case, and lighted a cigar from the end of his friend's, at the imminent risk of burning the tip of his nose; then settling himself against a pillar just below Mortmain, he began to puff away and look out on the night scene.

"You two Britishers knows good 'bacca from mouldy corn, you do; 'taint offen I gits a sniff like that ar," said Mr. Cephas Billins, looking up at John with his bright negro eyes. The woolly hair was wanting to complete the figure. His hung in elf-locks, thin and dirty, on his small head, the redeeming features of which were the mouth and nose. They were small and well cut.

John's kindly nature instantly answered the appeal.

"I am sorry, my poor fellow, to have forgotten you. Here, take all that remains, in my case. I am no great smoker. You are welcome to them," he said, as the long arm and enormous hand grasped eagerly at the offered gift.

"Wal, I won't say nofin agin Britishers no more, I won't: there's sum un 'em got words ez kind ez thet pooty gal thet talk'd tu mother an' I 'bout thet t'other warld, war she sed we wus holl tu go tu, war thar angels be an' sech like. I dinnt think much 'bout thar Devil, nor nofin, till I hearn her talkin' tu mother that ar night she got thar chollery. Then I ses, Cephas Billins, you try tu go war them sort go tu, an' you'll be a saint, an' wen millanyum cums, you'll hev your go at them ez guv it you, you will."

"What pretty girl was that, that talked to your mother?" John said, turning quickly on the man.

"Wal, ye see, mother did her washing, an' wen she war took'd wid thar chollery, she couldn't du it no how; so they wus sot tu tell her, an' as she wus 'lone, thet ez, her husband warn't thar, she just put her cloak on an' cum thru the garden tu our place, war mother an' me bides, tu se if she cud help thar poor creturs, she ses. She know'd me hall 'long, she did. I used tu fich an' carry things fur her. One day I wus sittin' 'mong thar flowers, waitin' fur a glass wine she promised me fur runnin' down t'ship an' back purty fast, an' he cummed in, he did, an' ses, 'You dirty brute you, git out o' this!' an' he hits me a drefell lick wid his cane. Oh, Vivan! she sed—fur she war

jist cummin wid thar wine in her own han', an' she always ca'd un Vivan—an' she sed, 'Don't be so cruel.'" He looked out into the dark night and took a great pull at his cigar, letting the smoke out slowly, with most appreciative enjoyment; then continued in the same tone: "Wen I thinks on her, there's sutthin' gits in my throat thet maks me feel skeery."

"Where is the young lady?" John said. "Will you take me to her house early to-morrow morning?"

"Wal, ye see, 'tisin't jist thet I kin du; for why, she aint thar, du you see, she aint."

"Not there! where is she then?"

"Wal, don't hurry me thin, an' I'll tell ye ez much'n I kin. I was goin' tu tell ye in her skeer she spill'd thar wine, an' I got nun."

John very nearly uttered a commination against the wine, but he stopped himself, and said, "But where is the young lady now?"

Mr. Mortmain had been listening with an amused air at the dialogue, but as he caught sight of John's earnest, anxious face bending over the man, by the light reflected from the open hall door, his amusement changed to surprise. He lighted another cigar and went on smoking silently. John, unconscious or careless if he were listening or not, followed up his questions.

"You have not answered me," he said impatiently. "Do you know where the young lady is now?"

"Ah! thet's wat I'm thinkin' I'd like tu know. I tell ye I fell streaked wen I seed her goin' away by

hersel'. Here's how it wuz. He went in thar ship fur England. I seen un board. Thar's a good many on um goes an' leaves thar wives behind. Wal, 'twas two nor three days arter thet, ez I wuz goin' tu hum, I see'd her funder an' you'd beliv' I cud see her, but I know'd t'way of her, though she'd got a large cloak on, an' t'garden hat thet cummed down t'ar nose. She'd got a porkmante a carrin', an' I up an' rin arter her; an' I sez, That's morn you kin du, let me carry thet, sez I. An' she sez, 'Cephas!' an' just ketched her breath ez much ez shook thar cloak a buster; but she didn't cry, not she—she wur too spirity fur thet. Then I sez, Wor shall I tak it tu? an' she sez, in a voice thet seem'd tu cum from very fur, 'Anywar.' Then she stood still fur a minit an' put her 'an' agin her 'ed, an' sez, sez she, 'Cephas, go on, an' get me a ticket fur one o' the up-river boats. I'm goin' thar.' I rin on afore her—they knows me at thar warf, they does; so I sez, It's fur a lady; an' they guv me thar ticket. The boat wuz jist goin' tu start; so I sez tu her, she must look sharp, an' she did; an' I stood an' watch'd her so long ez I cud see her. Then I wint back tu mother, an' I sez, I don't b'live in any kin'dom cum, nor nofin', if them's got thar orderin' of it lets gals like thet go adrift; fur I know'd summat wor 'rong be thar skeery look in her eyes an' t' white frightened face."

"What boat was it you took the ticket for?" John said. "Was it for Montreal or Toronto?"

"Wal, ye see, I don't jist know. She sed it didn't

matter ; so I took t' fus thet cum, an' she went away quiet an' natural." Then, correcting himself, he said—"There wuz a grit many boats frising an' fussin ; sum on um don't go so fur ez you sed."

John almost groaned aloud. He threw away the remainder of his cigar, and, forgetting to say good-night to Mortmain, hurried to his room to think over what he had better do.

Mr. Cephas Billins looked after John, and said, "Thet's a kind sort o' chap ; I wonder wut he wants to ketch her fur."

"I wonder too !" Mr. Mortmain muttered. Then, in his usual loud, good-natured tone of voice—"Here you, take these dollars I promised you ; and good-night to you, Mr. Cephas." And he, too, went in by the open door, leaving Mr. Cephas Billins to return to his mamma, wondering at the wastefulness of the Britishers.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JOHN DAVIES went to his room, but not to rest. He longed to be following Nelly. Every moment's delay was agony. Where might she not go in her madness ! What might she not be suffering ! The weary hours of the night must be passed before he could begin his search. He tried to sleep ; but only succeeded in falling into fitful slumbers, and starting from dreams full of grotesque forms of sorrow and

disappointment. The day dawned at length ; and, unable to sleep, he dressed himself and went out. On the stairs he met a sleepy waiter, who looked at him with surprise ; but who evidently thought it only another variety of the Britisher, and would have let him pass unnoticed, had John been so disposed. But on the preceding evening, Major Cornwall had told him where Captain Vaughan's house was situated ; and he wanted to ask some questions as to the nearest way to that part of the suburb of St. Rock. The direction ascertained, he went out into the fresh morning air. He could not do much yet ; he must wait till the world was astir ; but he could not wait quietly in his bedroom ; so he thought he would walk out to the house she had lived in, and see for himself. She might perhaps even be there still. That poor foolish fellow might be mistaken in his fancy that she had gone away. As he walked along the well-kept military roads, bordered by grassy slopes, the beauty of the scene roused even his pre-occupied mind. On his left, far beneath, was the river, sleeping still and partly shrouded with its night mist, only the tops of the masts here and there catching the early light that preceded the sun-rise. Brighter and brighter grew that light, tinting the edges of the clouds with every variety of lovely colour, and bringing out one after another the villages and homesteads in the distance. As John stopped for a moment to look around him, a few small drops of rain fell from a cloudlet, so light and fleecy that it was hard to believe it contained

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water. At that moment the sun rose above the horizon, and the fairy-looking shower formed a rainbow across the river, enclosing in its arch a man-of-war, with nearly all her sails set, prepared to take advantage of the early morning tide and wind to drop down the river. John stood transfixed with admiration at the picture before him. The frigate glistened like silver in the framework of lovely colours ; and the dashes of golden light from the rising sun caught one object after another, until the whole of that part of the river appeared aglow with light. The scene carried him back in thought to one of Claude's exquisite creations. John felt he had never realized that artist's thought before. It is so hard to believe in the climate Claude paints, when looking at his pictures in smoky London.

But the ship moved slowly on, and the rainbow faded, and John was once more on his way to battle with his sorrow. Half-an-hour's walking brought him to the house he sought. It stood back from the road in an opening formed by some broken rocks, making a grassy dell where the house stood. Trees and shrubs were planted on every spot of ground where anything could be made to grow. A natural spring formed a little cascade just by the drawing-room window ; and, finding an outlet below, lost itself after many wanderings in the big river. As John stood by the open gate, the rushing of the water was the only sound that broke the stillness. Small as the stream was, it gurgled and fretted over every little stone in its progress, and seemed quite lively in its demonstrations.

John entered the unfastened gate, and walked with light step up the path leading to the house. There was no sign of sleepers there, or of the activity of early risers. The veranda curtains flapped to and fro with broken strings. Some one had forgotten to untie them ; and the evening sea-breeze had been too strong for them. The blinds were up, and the windows unfastened. John stood still. He could not summon courage to enter the house ; he felt so sure she was gone. After a few moments he remembered Mr. Cephas Billins having said she went through the garden to see his mother, and he looked around for a path which might lead him out through the garden that way. As he was doing so he heard footsteps advancing, and Mr. Cephas himself stood before him.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MR. CEPHAS BILLINS was not an attractive creature at any time ; but in the fresh beauty of the morning, it made one shudder to think such men were made in God's image ; and yet it only wanted the second thought, what constitutes " God's image " ?

Sir Harry Vaughan was one of the handsomest men of his time, refined in manner, scrupulously neat and clean in all his personal habits ; but his soul, the thinking part of his nature, that which might have been a germ of immortality, was what the pen fears

to express—dark, dreadful, the very scum of the vilest natures. With much to aid him in becoming a good man, he had deliberately chosen to be a bad one.

Mr. Cephas Billins was another representative of human nature. Born in a slave-pen, he had received no more moral training than a dog or cat; but the religious instinct taught him to grope after something higher. His mother, by some caprice of her owners, had obtained their freedom; and they had found their way to Quebec. In some respects they were worse off now than when they were in slavery. Having freedom, however, Cephas had wandered about among men, and learnt that he was allied by a common nature to the rich and noble,—that he was something better than the beasts of burden, with which in his childhood he had been confounded. Though it was not until Nelly took an interest in himself and his mother that he began to realize the idea that he was a human being, properly so called,—that the heaven of the gallant soldier might be his heaven,—that he might share the same home of rest with the pure-hearted girl who sought to teach him,—that together they might join in the music of heaven, sheltered by the Father's love from all sorrow. Poor Nelly! in her direst hour of sorrow she had been the means of rousing one soul to think,—of touching with fire the tiny, mouldering flame which might burn fitfully, but which would go on catching at one object after another, until it could blend itself into the mighty light of truth, and be wafted to the throne of God.

He was very dirty to look at, was Mr. Cephas Billins ; but in that other world to which they were both hastening, the baronet might envy the porter's shining form. Now we have to do with the dirty, half-crazy porter, scarcely knowing good from evil, for the pressure of his daily woes absorbed his every energy.

"Wal, so you'v cum to look arter her, I 'spects," Mr. Cephas said, as he seated himself on a stone at the edge of the tiny waterfall. "'Taint no use afollerin her here ; she'll never cum back here no more. I 'aint tellin' you no lies. I 'aint goin' tu tell no more nor I kin help, coz she sez our Father's agin them's tells lies ; an' I'm jist goin' tu try an' think it out, an' du what she sez, an' p'raps I'll see her agin." He looked up into John's face with a curious mixture of doubt and hope ; then said, "Du you b'live in it holl?" Without waiting for an answer, he turned and looked into the water, muttering, "I wonder war it is !" As he said the last words, he shied a stone at a tiny lizard that flashed a moment in the sunlight on the rock, and then darted into the water.

John had stood listening to him in the hope he might say something that would be useful to him to guide him in his search. "How is it there is no notice that the house is to let?" said John.

"Lor', thar time isn't up for a month nor more ; and mother an' I hev got tu look arter it. Thet t'other chap, him's they ca's Sir Harry, he cum'd fer tu see her 'fore she left ; an' wut she sed tu im riled im pooty considerable, for he wus jist white wen he went

away. You'v' no ider how he shook when he got'n his hos ; an' yet fer all thet he rode away jist ez grand ez ever."

John had a strange longing to see the inside of the house that had been her home ; and telling Cephas he should not be long, he entered through one of the French windows. It happened to be the drawing-room, and for a moment he could hardly believe she would not come. There was the piano open, with some of her old favourite songs lying about ; and her desk was unfastened, as though she had thought of writing, but changed her mind. Most familiar of all, the little hat and cloak, thrown on the sofa in a hurry, as she had entered from the garden, perhaps to read her betrayer's last note ; for there was a crushed envelope on the carpet by the sofa. John picked it up, and smoothing it out read the direction. It was to Sir Harry Vaughan, and was written in Captain Vaughan's hand. As John looked, he almost fancied he could trace the outline of her form on the soft, yielding sofa pillow, where she had thrown herself, crushed with her sorrow, motionless in her quiet agony. It would not have been well for Captain Vaughan to have crossed John's path then ; he was not quite himself.

Mr. Cephas Billins, who was looking in on him as he turned to leave the room, said, when telling his mother afterwards—"I made tracks tu him ez slick ez I could, fer he war real dreffle tu look at ; jist skeer'd me he did, wid thar fire'n 'is eye, an' thar devil grip

in his han'. By golly ! I made tracks, fer I wus real skeer'd. An' he never seen me ; but jist ups, an' goes straight 'long back tu Quebec."

CHAPTER XXX.

WHEN John got back to his hotel, he found Mortmain and some of his friends at breakfast ; and he joined them with as much apparent indifference as he could assume. After breakfast, he declined accompanying any of the parties that were being arranged for the day's amusement, and made his way to the quarters of Major Cornwall, whose regiment was stationed in the barracks built on the site of the old Jesuit College. Sir Harry had a house very near. John wanted to ask Major Cornwall a few questions before he paid a visit to Sir Harry, whom he was determined to see.

In his conversation with the Major the preceding evening, John had found they had some friends in common among military men. The Major had been in Wales, too, and had even had some shooting on John's property some years before, when John was a boy at school ; so that he felt he had found an old friend in the kind-hearted, honest soldier, whose indignation was great at the conduct of Captain Vaughan and his brother. "Such fellows ought to be kicked out of the profession," he said.

John went to him this morning to tell him what

he had learned of Nelly's fate, and also to spend an hour ; for Sir Harry Vaughan was a late riser, and John was too impatient to remain at the hotel. They talked the subject over for some time, and when John rose to go, Major Cornwall said he would go on board some of the river steamers, and try if he could find some trace of the poor girl.

John had no difficulty in finding the house of the Baronet, for the Major had directed him to it. But finding the house was a very different thing from seeing the master. Sir Harry did not live in the same state here that he did in England ; but still there were two or three servants to pass before any could intrude on the great man's presence. The servant who opened the door to John was not Sir Harry's own man ; and he hesitated as to what answer he should give. The visitor was unusually early, and had not John looked every inch a gentleman, he would have said at once, "Not at home ;" but he had often had to encounter the terrible passion of his master, as much for doing his duty as leaving it undone, when the results were unsatisfactory ; so he asked John into a room leading out of the hall, and said he did not know if Sir Harry was at home ; but he would ask. The gentleman who was Sir Harry's personal attendant was like his master. As much self-indulgence and as little principle as possible were two of his characteristics. He knew Sir Harry would be engaged for an hour or two, and so had gone out to arrange some little matters of his own ; consequently he was not easily found, and John

was left to wait and amuse himself as he best could. The room into which he had been shewn was called the smoking-room. It might also be the room in which Sir Harry transacted any business, if he ever did it; for there was an *escritoir* in the room, fitted up with every accommodation for writing. The carpets and hangings were dark green. The curtains shaded the light so much that it was quite pleasant, coming in from the bright town, glistening with all its shiny roofs and spires. There were some fine pictures—landscapes—on the walls, just in the best lights to bring out their beauties; and on the tables all the most amusing books the literature of the day could produce, not only English, but French and German. As he waited, John opened a few from habit; but he quickly shut them. They were not his kind of books. The caprice of the owner seemed to have exhausted itself on the chairs: there were not two alike; but each and all were the very acme of comfort. In one recess of the room there was a *chiffonier* of very costly workmanship—of marble, glass and wood. But the beauty of the *chiffonier* was forgotten when looking at its motley contents. First and foremost were the pipes. Exquisitely painted figures of most of the well-known professional women in the fashionable world, both of America and France, figured on their bowls. Their stems were most costly. Then there were cigar-holders, of every variety of shape, in gold and silver, and cigar-cases from every land. Scattered among them were two or three beautifully mounted riding-whips.

John wandered about the room, fidgeting at the loss of time. He had just stood still opposite the chiffonier, looking at it rather than seeing anything on it, when the door opened, and a black woolly head peered in. The man held in his hand some more glittering toys, similar to those John was looking at; but they had wanted polishing, and he was about replacing them. Coming up to the chiffonier, he said, "Beg pardon, sar."

"Is Sir Harry Vaughan at home?" said John.

"Don't know, sar. Neber know, sar. Mr. Prince him Sir Harry's gentleman; he knows when Sir Harry likes tu be 'tome."

"Oh!" thought John. He said aloud, "Where is Mr. Prince?"

"Mr. Prince him gone out; always go out wen Sir Harry breakfasts in thar yellow draw'n-room, coz Madame Celeste is thar."

"I want to see Sir Harry on very particular business. Can you shew me to him?" John asked.

"I 'aint goin' tu do thet 'ar—couldn' no how. Mr. Prince 'ud mak' a bobbery, sar."

"Well," said John, shewing a handful of dollars, "if I give you these, will you shew me the room he is in? I do not want you to announce me. Just open the door, and then leave the rest to me."

"An' I'm tu mak' tracks. Sposin' you tells who t'war let you up," Sambo said, with a cunning leer. "No, couldn't du it no how;" but he crossed his hands before him, and looked very demure.

The love of an adventure, at the expense of a master who never spoke to him but to curse him because he was a fool (and that Sambo felt was more somebody else's fault than his), was getting the better of his prudence. John thought he had not offered enough to tempt him, so added a few more dollars. Sambo's eyes glistened.

"Wal, come on then ; 'taint likely Mr. Prince 'll catch me. Guess me shall hev tu be slick, however ;" and, suiting the action to the word, he accepted John's dollars, and preceded him out of the room, across a large hall, and up a short, broad flight of stairs, beautifully carpeted. The second landing was lighted by stained-glass windows, and so thickly matted that footsteps could not be heard. They crossed the broad landing almost without making any sound. Sambo paused for a moment, grinned from ear to ear, and then threw open a door that moved softly on its hinges. Having done so, he really did make tracks ; and he left John Davies unannounced and unheard, as far as the occupants of the room were concerned, standing at the open door.

CHAPTER XXXI.

It was a finely-proportioned room, lighted by many long narrow windows. The glare of sunlight was softened by the heavy folds of amber curtains of some

rich material, and full white lace curtains under them, forming together, with the venetians outside, a beautiful shade, and shedding a soft light on everything in the room. At the farther end there were folding doors draped by the same amber and lace, so that you could only guess it led to a conservatory by catching sight through the folds of lace of some of the flowers. On a sofa near the middle of the room lay Sir Harry Vaughan, reading a book that seemed to please him, for he smiled as he read, and from the conservatory came some notes of a song in a clear treble—so clear and high, it was scarcely possible to believe they were from a human voice, and yet the runs and embellishments continued, as though the singer was trying what she could do. At the moment John stood at the open door, Sir Harry called out in a languid yet half-pleased tone, "Don't make such a confounded noise, Lis." He was answered by the voice running the gamut from the lower C up to C above the line, and then breaking off into a scornful laugh. The next minute a figure stood in the shadow of the curtains. All that John could see was, that it was a woman elegantly and slightly formed, dressed in a scarlet merino morning wrapper, lined apparently with white silk, and a great deal of white lace at the open throat. Her black hair fell over two-thirds of her figure, and was thrown from her face. The hair was quite wet; apparently she had not long come from her bath. She held in her hand a basket of hot-house flowers.

"What is the use of spoiling all those flowers?" Sir Harry said, looking up from his book.

The lady threw herself and her flowers on a lounge near him, and answered, "They are for my bouquet."

"You are not going to the ball," he said, with a slightly defiant look.

"Who says so?" she replied.

"I do," came from Sir Harry's lips; but it was by no means a positive sound.

"Pish!" was the answer, as she contrasted the colours of the flowers, holding them together up to the light to see the effect. She spoke again in a voice of the most perfect indifference: "I shall be queen here as long as I stay; when we are tired of one another, we can part, *mon cher ami*."

John paused for a few moments at the door, uncertain how to act while these few words passed. He now walked forward, and Sir Harry rose with surprise from the sofa. They were not unknown to each other, and Sir Harry guessed in a moment the object of John's visit; but he was too thoroughly a man of the world to betray his thought by word or look. He said, with cold stiffness, "Mr. Davies, I believe. I have the honour of an early visit from you." He cast a sharp, quick glance at the door, but Mr. Prince was not there to receive the mental curse. He said aloud, "Pray be seated."

"Thank you," John said. "I have a few words of business with you, and shall not detain you long. I offer no apology for my early visit, as it was a necessity

for me to see you. I come from the Rev. Mr. Llewellyn, Sir Harry Vaughan, to ask you what has become of his daughter, your brother's wife."

Sir Harry had had time to think, and he changed his manner from the haughty villain to the *blasé* man of fashion. He leaned back on the sofa, with his light-coloured eyes almost shaded by their long eyelashes, and said in a surprised tone, "My brother's wife! I am not aware he is married."

The fine healthy colour faded slightly from John's cheek. When passion waged hard warfare with him, he generally became a little white, and as he grew angry he grew quiet. He had hard work now to keep from uttering the words, "Scoundrel! liar!" but he did refrain. He rose from his seat, and leaning one hand on the table, bent slightly forwards towards Sir Harry, saying, "You know your brother, Captain Vaughan, took Nelly Llewellyn from her home, and brought her here as his wife"—raising his voice, in spite of all his efforts, he continued, "and now, villain that he is, has left her, perhaps to die alone in this country."

"Oh! ah! pretty Nelly; you are interested in her; but a—you make a great mistake in supposing he married her," the Baronet drawled out.

John's hand fastened over his stick; it was thick and supple, and his tall, strong frame contrasted well with the elegant, enervated figure of the fashionable *roué*, who was clad in an Indian dressing-gown of ample dimensions, and still reclined on the sofa with

insolent indifference, looking at John from his half-closed eyes.

"I have no proof, and you know it," John said in a low, calm voice ; "you have destroyed that, I suppose, between you, and driven the poor child out into the world, with her broken heart and maddened brain. If you have one grain of manhood in you, for your mother's sake, for your sisters'—she was their friend—help me to find her !"

"Pon my word, you ask me to take a great deal more trouble than I am disposed to take for the sake of helping you to a suitable wife," Sir Harry sneeringly said.

John made a step forward, but the lady whom Sir Harry called Lis stood between them. She put her hand up deprecatingly to John, and said, in a sweet, witching voice (for John had pleased her), "I will tell you all about the poor girl."

"Go back to your flowers !" the Baronet said, rising from the sofa and trying to lead her back to the conservatory ; "I do not want you here."

"Don't you ?" she replied contemptuously. "And suppose I choose to stay—what then ?"

Sir Harry, looked very angry, but he did not answer her.

"You're such a devil, Harry," she said, raising her magnificent dark eyes to his ; "I shall begin to think you are a double of the arch fiend himself. You go into the conservatory and smoke till you are in better temper ; I shall tell Mr. Davies all I know, and help

him as much as I can. My woman's heart can feel for the poor betrayed girl."

"Your woman's heart!" he echoed scornfully.

"Aye, my woman's heart, you cold, sneering villain," she said, turning on him. "You and such as you have taken all else from me; but God—if there be a God—has given me my beauty and my voice. My white father must have been such as you when he left me a slave-girl to the mercy of his overseer. Bought and sold like a dog, I owe thanks to none on earth. Music, glorious music, set me free. I bought my own freedom, and now I am rich—the Prima Donna of the season too. What if I am scorned by the silken daughters of goodness? They have been sent to walk one path, I another; but fortune has done one thing right, for we are well matched, Harry. Go!" She waved her hand towards the conservatory door, and pressed one little slippered foot tight on the carpet, her whole figure quivering with excitement. "I shall tell Mr. Davies," she continued, in a firm, calmer voice, "what I choose."

The two men had listened to this burst of passion in silent surprise. Sir Harry, with a slight shrug of the shoulders, sauntered into the conservatory. He knew it was useless to contend with her, and so he left her alone with John Davies.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE Creole girl had stood between them, one hand crushing in its angry grasp the flowers it held, the other pressing back her luxuriant masses of hair from her face, as she watched the retreating figure of Sir Harry. Her beauty was splendid of its kind, dark, scornful and cold though it was. The mouth was perfect as a Borgia's, and might have been trained to express love and kindness, if she had ever known what unselfish love and kindness were. She had seen Nelly once, when Sir Harry took her to visit Captain Vaughan, and though Nelly shrank from her bold address, and was cold and distant in her reception of her, the winning kindness of her nature made it impossible for her to be rude to any one, and the evident suffering of the young wife touched the Creole's warm heart. Her unbridled soul made her hate a great deal more than she loved. Men had deceived, cajoled and betrayed her from childhood, and she hated and scorned them for the admiration her beauty excited in them. Now and then in her short life she had shewn a wondrous amount of patient love for some oppressed creatures. In the one interview, Nelly had won her sympathy, and now her whim was to befriend her as much as lay in her power. She threw herself carelessly on the sofa Sir Harry had occupied, and pointing to a chair for John to take, said, "You are a friend of Mrs. Vaughan's?" He bowed, and she con-

tinued: "She is Vivian's wife, but he has destroyed all the proofs of their marriage. That precious friend of mine, Harry, caused him to do it, and they have made the girl believe between them that it was a sham marriage." Raising herself from her recumbent attitude, she bent her bright, laughing yet haughty glance on John, as she uttered quickly, "Why does she not, with her beauty and talents, raise herself to independence, as I have done, and kick them from her as she would a dead dog? She has no spirit. She has not been trained under the overseer's lash until she learned to hate!—hate!—hate!"

The last words came from her lips with a hissing sound; a slight tint of colour rushed over the dark cheek, and her head drooped from John's startled gaze.

"You say you can give me proof of Nelly's marriage," he said. "I wish I had words to thank you for your kind sympathy."

"I did not say I could give you proof; I said I believed she was married, and that Sir Harry and his brother had destroyed all proof. There is nothing but my word—and who will believe that against a gentleman of high descent and honourable name? Do you know what I am?"—she looked up with her dark, flashing eyes—"and he is an English gentleman." Her head drooped again, and she laughed a low, scornful laugh. After a pause, she continued: "I can tell you all I know; but that, I fear, is all the good I can do you. Harry made his brother Vivian give her up. He told

him he would see him die in a gaol rather than pay his debts if he persisted in declaring his marriage. Captain Vaughan was very much of his mind, you may be sure, or he would not have been so easily made to play such a scoundrel's part. Captain Vaughan told his brother that on their voyage out here he destroyed all his wife's letters to her father that she had entrusted him to post; for he did not want her to hold any communication with her old home until he had consulted Sir Harry. The broken-hearted girl thought her father would not answer them, and had cast her off,—a feeling her husband encouraged; for he did not wish her to return to England. Captain Vaughan left her without telling her he was going, and Harry promised to see after her and provide for her and break the news. He wanted me to go and do his devil's errand; but he did not ask me twice." Again she looked up with one of those quick, passionate glances that made one feel the power of the soul bending so fearfully over the abyss of ruin.

"Go on," John said, catching her excitement.

She took up a fallen rose lying near her hand, and picking it slowly to pieces, continued: "Sir Harry went to see her, and took money to give her. What passed between them I do not know, except that she refused his money. When I heard that, I went on the following day, hoping to see her and talk to her; for, young and inexperienced as she was, I felt sure she could not realize the future that was before her. But she was gone, and had only taken a small

portmanteau with her, that could not hold more than a few changes of clothes. The money was left, where Sir Harry had put it in his interview with her, on the table: it had not been touched. The only information I could gain was from a half-silly fellow who used to work in the garden and run of errands for them. He said she went away in one of the up-river boats, but did not remember which. "Besides," she added, "those boats are so crowded, and change passengers so often, that it is not likely any captain would remember her, even if he were asked."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

JOHN listened to his companion's rapid words with strange interest,—an interest apart from the one absorbing subject of his thought. He looked at the untaught, graceful, reckless girl, with sad admiration. Music had done something for her. It was the only refining influence that had mingled with her bitter experience of life, and she was in truth a very child of song. When revelling in some fine old melody, she softened into something beautifully winning and bewitching: but man and man's falsehood had done their work. From her early childhood she had been the victim of the worst and most sensual kind of men, until her great talents attracted public notice, and with the help of some kind friends of liberty she obtained her

freedom. But the warm heart, so often deceived, had become sceptical of goodness and truth, and was fast hardening into cold, bitter hate and scorn. It was no use lingering there, John felt, and he rose to go. She walked by his side to the door of the room and out on to the landing at the top of the staircase ; then leaned carelessly against the rails, and again held out her hand to John, saying, "You will often hear of me ; let me believe there is one good man who will think kindly of me ; think of me as he knew me, not judge me by the perverted stories of this truthful world." The old bitterness was coming back. As John was going to answer her, he thought he saw tears glisten for a moment on the long dark lashes ; but she did not wait for his reply. With a gesture of farewell, she turned into the drawing-room to find Sir Harry and have it out with him about the ball.

John went down stairs. A servant, whom he had not seen before, opened the door to let him out. He could not help looking round to ascertain if his black friend was to be seen ; but Sambo had made himself scarce for a time.

John turned towards the quarters of Major Cornwall. On arriving there he found the Major had not returned from the water-side. He waited with what patience he could, thinking over his plans, until his friend returned. When he did come in, Major Cornwall told him he had been down to the quay from which many of the up-river steamers started, but it only convinced him of the impossibility of tracing any

one particular person who might have gone a short voyage with any of them a few days before. The two friends took luncheon together, and while so engaged arranged their plans. John determined to leave Quebec that afternoon, and go on to Montreal and Toronto, if it were necessary to go so far ; for he intended to visit all the intermediate stopping-places, and follow up any track that chance might send him. The kind-hearted soldier promised in the mean time to keep a sharp look-out for any circumstance that might throw light on the fate of the unfortunate girl in Quebec or its neighbourhood. "The weather would soon settle now into real winter," he said, "and then the sleighing parties would begin, and many a remote homestead be visited." It was a great source of comfort to John to find a true friend in the stranger's land ; and it seemed equally pleasant to the Major to have made the acquaintance of such a countryman as John Davies. They parted with mutual good wishes, and the hope in a short time to meet again.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE winter months passed away as merrily as ever to Major Cornwall ; but he found no trace of Nelly. Often when the sleighs raced over the snow, and the bells rang out, as they passed some distant farm, he looked back, and thought, "I wonder if she has taken

refuge there ;" but he had made inquiries at so many homes about domestics, governesses, and that class of young persons, that he was beginning to be laughed at ; and as his inquiries had hitherto been without success, he felt inclined to give up hope on the subject, and leave it to chance.

To John, the winter months had been a very sad time. He had travelled about the best way he could ; sometimes thinking he had found a trace of Nelly, and after vexatious wanderings backwards and forwards would find the person as unlike her as possible. Many a sleigh journey he made in the course of the winter, only to arrive at some distant place and meet with disappointment.

If he did not find her, he gained much insight into character on these journeys, and made friendships, and strengthened his nature in the enlarged and kindly view he was disposed to take of life. The world was not filled with men like Sir Harry and Captain Vaughan, and John felt thankful for every good man he met : it was something gained on the hopeful side of life.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ON the May following, John Davies returned to Quebec, without having found the slightest clue to Nelly's whereabouts. If she were alive became now

a doubt in his mind. Many times through the bitter cold of the past winter he had fancied her dying neglected and uncared for ; and such thoughts had power to unnerve even his strong, healthy mind. In his winter wanderings he had found it difficult to obtain his letters, and as he did not expect any of importance, he made arrangements to have them sent to Major Cornwall's quarters to await him there ; for when he left Quebec he had hoped to return to it much sooner than he did. When he landed this second time at Quebec, it was on a bright spring morning. Multitudes of ships were busy preparing for sea, and gaiety and bustle prevailed everywhere. His first object was to see Major Cornwall ; but when he got to the barracks he found his friend gone. The Major had been fortunate enough, young Douglas whom he saw said, to exchange into one of the regiments going to the seat of war ; and had left only a few days before John's arrival. Mr. Douglas had taken care of John's few letters, and also told him the Major had been utterly baffled in all his attempts to find any trace of Nelly. Sir Harry had also left ; for the story of Nelly's wrongs had got about, and he was very coldly received in society.

John put his letters in his pocket, and telling the porter who was waiting with his luggage to take it to the hotel where he had put up when he was in Quebec before, he made his way to the spot where the castle of St. Lewis used to stand, now converted into a beautiful public walk ; for he did not want to read his

letters before witnesses. There was one from Bessie Morgan with a black-edged envelope, and his instinct told him there was sorrow in it. The season was not sufficiently far advanced into summer to make it likely many people would be taking exercise on the St. Lewis promenade. It was a spot John wished to see again, on account of its magnificent view, and not very far from where he then was; so he turned his steps in that direction. Having found a seat close to the iron railings that protected him from the precipice, he took his letters from his pocket. Bessie's was the first he opened; it had enclosed in it a note in Nelly's handwriting, which was blurred and blotted with the tears of those who had read it. Nelly's note was dated from her house in Quebec the day before she disappeared. It was addressed to her father. John read—

“Father forgive me, for I have not wilfully dishonoured you. I thought myself married, and that I should come back a happy wife to kneel at your feet for pardon; but I have been betrayed—left. Father, do not curse him! Have mercy on him for my sake; but I forget you must have cursed me. Oh God! Father, I wrote to you twice before I left England, and once when I first landed here, and you have not answered me; your silence is enough. I will bear it all as best I can. Pray for me, father,—pray that we may meet in heaven. God will forgive me; I will cling to that hope. I will not crawl with my dishonoured name to your door to disgrace your

holy calling. I will lose myself in this great world. Mother, Bessie, Father, if you could see how my heart is broken, you would forgive me.

“NELLY.”

John read the letter through and grasped it tight, though he was unconscious of the action ; for his gaze was far away along the beautiful river, glittering with sunlight and life. A mist came before his eyes. He brushed it away with an impatient gesture, and still looked out far away as though for some distant object. He sat thus for some time ; then remembering Bessie's letter, he resumed life's work with a heavy sigh. Carefully folding Nelly's little soiled note, he drew from the folds of his dress a locket, which had enclosed in it a likeness of her when she was a child ; and placing the note inside it, he clasped it tight and replaced it unseen in his dress. Having done so, he began to read Bessie Morgan's letter. As he went on his strong frame trembled, and the tears that had not fallen for Nelly filled his eyes. He finished it with a bitter groan, and sat long with his head bowed on the hand that held the stick.

Bessie in her letter told him Nelly's note had arrived the day before her father and mother were to leave Llansketty. Mrs. Llewellyn was very busy, and Mr. Llewellyn took the letter from the postman himself. He went with it without telling them into his own room, his sanctum. When his wife went to call him for dinner she found him speechless, and Nelly's

letter clasped in one hand, which he held to his breast. With the other hand he had tried to write on a piece of paper near him—

“My child, my love, in life or death I forgive all—
all. “LLEWELLYN.”

As Mrs. Llewellyn entered the room, Pepper, who was lying at his master's feet, gave a low, mournful howl. The poor man looked feebly at his wife, and laying his head on her faithful breast, sighed once or twice, and then was still. In that small room, without moving from him, she could reach the bell, and soon summoned aid ; but for him there was no help on earth. In a few days the new Curate read the Burial Service over him ; and they left him to rest in the churchyard he had loved to wander in and meditate at eventide. Some day men will bring Sir Harry there, and those two must stand at God's judgment-seat together.

Bessie's note told John she had taken her mother and Bridget to live with her. She also said they had a great inclination to emigrate ; their old home had become distasteful to them, and Mr. Morgan's health was very delicate ; so much so that he had been recommended to try a warmer climate. They felt sure the poor wanderer would never return to Wales, and they were as likely to meet her at places where crowds of emigrants went, as anywhere.

John sat thinking. It flashed across his mind that perhaps she might try to make her way to the East ;

and the more he thought of it, the more strong his belief in the possibility grew. "I will return to Wales," he muttered half aloud; "see them at home, and then go to the East myself—see him." His brow grew dark, and his face white—whiter; then he sat quite still for a long time. The day was far advanced when he rose to go. He went to the hotel, and ascertained there was a steamer to start the following morning for England. He sent and secured a place in her before he retired for the night, and in the morning he bade adieu to America.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

I MUST take my readers to a small town in Wales. Never mind the name of it. I should find it very difficult to spell, and when I had spelt it, few Englishmen would be able to read it. There was a street in the town called Church Street,—a prim street, and ambitious withal; for one of the rows had pavement on the footpath. The pavement answered many purposes. One was to trip up unwary pedestrians of an absent turn of mind, and let them down suddenly when they got to the end of it. It was also a fine place for the muffin-man to enjoy himself on, when the rest of the footpath was muddy and soft from white frost and thaw, or a good mizzling rain would do as well to produce that comfortable state of foot-

way. But the most important effect the pavement produced was the gentility it imparted to the inhabitants of the row. The little Welsh girls who lived in the other street felt a degree of solemnizing awe when they walked on the pavement, and looked through the iron railings that separated each small garden from the street. It was the best end of my unspellable little town, and all the aristocrats lived there. There were steps to the houses, and we will take the liberty of going up them and in by the front door, into a neat little hall with bright slippery floorcloth and polished hat-stand. Opening a door on the right, we enter a sitting-room, very pretty and cheerful and pleasant. It gave one the idea of being something between a breakfast-room and drawing-room. It had a large round table in the middle, so that it might serve for a dining-room, combining, you see, all the advantages of three rooms in one. At all events, as soon as you entered you felt at home in it. On this June afternoon, for it was near the first of the month, two ladies occupied it. At the round table sat Bessie Morgan writing, arranging some accounts connected with her Sunday-school. One of the windows was open to admit the soft summer air, which came laden with perfume from the mignonette and roses. Near it sat Mrs. Llewellyn in her widow's dress; she was employed on a small piece of work. She was very still. There was no despair in her face now. She had taken her sorrows and laid the burden of them at her Heavenly Father's feet, and could say, "It was Thy will. To

“Thee I resign them, Father, till I too may come to them.” She could again be the useful friend of any who suffered, and was a great help to her son-in-law and daughter; but she rarely smiled, and if she did, it was because she tried to do so for the sake of others, and very sad that struggling smile was. She sat at the window now working silently, with Pepper at her feet. The noisy voices of children came in at the open window, for half a dozen of them had chosen to make the pavement their afternoon walk. The muffin-man had just come up, too, and he was making the most of the pavement, and ringing his abominable shrill little bell loud enough to drive half a score of nervous, organ-hating old bachelors crazy. Bridget and Mr. Morgan were fond of muffins, and that old muffin-man took advantage of their weakness. Bridget put a short stop to the noise by going out and selecting some for tea. As she stood talking, she could see as far as the corner of the street. The only hotel in the town was situated there, and a strange postchaise had just driven away from the door. The next minute a tall gentleman came down the hotel steps, and up the street towards where she was standing; and it said a good deal for the improvement John’s tailor had made in his personal appearance, that Bridget did not know him, but took him for a lord, as she afterwards said. He brushed past her as she stood amazed at the open gate. His footsteps sounded on the gravel, and a short, low cry escaped from Mrs. Llewellyn. Bessie started up, and the next moment received the

warm-hearted pressure of his hand. The mother stood trembling by her work-table. John took her hand, and bending reverently down pressed his lips to her forehead. We will leave them while he tells them of all his wanderings and disappointments, and go into the parlour again with Bridget and the tea-things.

When Bridget opened the door to take in the tea-tray she nearly dropped it, for she thought it necessary to make a low courtesy at the same moment; but when she had got the tea-things safe on the table, she exclaimed, "Sure, Mr. John, to think it war you!" and she set about arranging her table in a daft-like way, Mrs. Morgan would have said at any other time, but now she quietly put the things in their places for her, and said nothing; her heart was too full of renewed regret to think of anything but poor lost Nelly. Bridget, seeing the tearful eyes around her, made a hasty retreat to the kitchen, where she had a good cry, sniffing and rubbing her nose to her heart's content. She heard Mr. Morgan come in from his afternoon walk among his parishioners, brush his shoes carefully, and go into the parlour. It seemed a long time before they rang to have the tea-things taken away, and when they did so, Bridget could see her poor old mistress had been weeping bitterly. John sat by her side holding her hand and speaking words of comfort in a low voice, and she thankfully answered him by a silent pressure of the hand.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A FEW days passed quickly by in the neighbourhood of the old home. From Mr. Barker's letters John was prepared to find "The Gables," his own house, let for a few years. He had wished it to be so, because he felt he should be more free to wander where he liked. While he remained in Wales he took rooms at the hotel, but spent all the disengaged part of his days with Mrs. Morgan and Mrs. Llewellyn. He rode out to "The Gables" once or twice to look about him, passed the Curate's cottage at Llansketty; and one evening, just before dark, when a few bright stars were shining, he tied his horse outside the churchyard gate, and went in. It was all trim and neat. He found Mr. Llewellyn's grave near to the little iron wicket that led into the park, where the Curate had so often stood and watched his beautiful child at play with the daisies and buttercups. I will not try to analyze John's thoughts, for the Great Spirit of universal Love held communion with the good man's heart. He stood silently by the grave, and his angry passions calmed down. He felt he was very near to God in that quiet churchyard by his friend's grave. Silently he stood with folded hands looking on the ground; but his spirit was away seeking his friend in some other life, for it was impossible to believe that festering dust at his feet was all that remained of the warm, generous-hearted friend, father, child of God.

Many a long conversation took place in Mrs. Morgan's pleasant parlour about the possibility and probability of Nelly's fate. It was finally determined that John should start as soon as he could for the seat of war, and follow the moving troops until he overtook Captain Vaughan's regiment. After an interview with him, which he was determined to obtain, he felt he could with more comfort join Mr. and Mrs. Morgan in their intended emigration. John had not made up his mind to remain in Australia ; but Nelly had often said she should like to visit the sunny land. And if in his interview with Captain Vaughan he was not led to change his mind, he might as well go there, he thought, for a few years as anywhere else. Besides, he had almost a son's interest in Mrs. Llewellyn's comfort and happiness, and he felt he should like to see her settled in her new home. He was to go direct to London, and make his way as quickly as he could to the East. While he was away, the Morgans were to prepare for their new life. They found no difficulty in getting a successor for Mr. Morgan, as they had been thinking the matter over for some time ; but then there was the house and furniture to be got rid of, and their outfit and the necessities they wished to take with them to procure. Truly, Mrs. Morgan and Bridget had a busy time before them.

Mrs. Llewellyn, who in the old happy days scarcely took any notice of Pepper, now seemed to have but one anxiety, and that was that she should not lose him. It was sad to see how the poor woman clung

to the poor little doggie that had been the pet and plaything both of her husband and her lost child.

Active, busy, sensible Bessie did not give herself or any one else time to think. In the course of a month she had sold the furniture, all except a few pet things she wished still to adorn her home, wherever that home might be. With her husband's help she established herself in tolerably comfortable lodgings near Kennington Common. Mr. Morgan had been Curate of St. John's Church, Kennington, and knew the neighbourhood. He went to London a short time before his wife and Mrs. Llewellyn to procure the lodging and be ready to receive them.

It was on the evening of a dusty July day when our two Welsh ladies first made their acquaintance with the neighbourhood of London. Mrs. Llewellyn had a sort of indefinite belief that petty larceny and dog-stealing were amusements much practised by Londoners, and she looked jealously round as she got out to see that no one stole Pepper. The landlady who opened the door also looked at Pepper, but with very different feelings. She said nothing, however. They had their own servant, she thought, to attend to this lodger. Here we will leave them to await John's return, and follow him once more.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

It is of no use my describing the journey to Constantinople. It has been done so well and so often, that almost every reader knows something about it. When the war was first talked of, and the troops were sent Eastward, there were a few individuals who fitted out ships on private venture. These contained things that gentlemen were likely to want, and not likely to get, whenever they did want them, through the commissariat. Through Mr. Barker's interest, and also by paying very high for it, John got his passage in one of these ships, and arrived at Varna when fever and cholera were doing their most deadly work. The captain of the ship John arrived in did not wish to unload at Varna. He had heard some rumours that made him think it would be better to reserve his cargo for a time ; so he went sufficiently near the shore to enable John to land in a boat, and stood out to sea again. And it required a man as much in earnest as John to undertake that landing, even though the boatmen seemed to know quite well what they were about. Ever since they had entered the Black Sea, the weather had been wretched—squally, with thick, mizzling rain, or a fog that prevented one seeing even a short distance ahead. Every now and then the fog drifted away a little, giving some hope of finer weather, and then came down again cold, clammy, and so thick, that it felt like a wet blanket. As John sat in the

boat, he could not help wondering if they should ever find the landing-place which they could not see. Suddenly the mist blew away, and to his intense surprise they were not only close to the landing-place, but from a glimpse he caught of the country inland, it seemed rich with verdure. Just as John's boat was nearing the quay, a man-of-war's boat, with its full complement of men, shot past, nearly upsetting John's more modest craft. The officer, who had occupied the stern seat, waited half a minute for John to land, and then slightly apologised for the rough push his men had given him. John made light of the inconvenience, but took the opportunity of asking the stranger if he could tell him where to find Major Cornwall's quarters.

"Are you a friend of his?" said the officer, turning to John with a look of interest. "Cornwall is my friend. I happen to have an hour to spare, and have come on shore to see him. He has not been many days in Varna, so you are in luck;" adding, "If you will come with me, I will take you to his tent." The bluff, jolly fellow seemed to think he was doing the honours of war to the landsman, and as they went along often kicked out of the way bits of refuse that lay in their path, with the laughing remark, "They are not given to holy-stoning here."

It was indeed a motley group they had landed among, Turks and Frenchmen, sailors and soldiers, and among them, getting in everybody's way, the handsome, slow-moving, broken-spirited Bulgarian, with his equally

slow-moving buffaloes and araba. The scene was a most astonishing one to John ; for as the weather cleared up the bay seemed alive with boats full of soldiers and sailors. Military music burst out every now and then from many places far and near. All seemed busy, earnest and active, except the few natives they met.

"Our walk will be about a mile inland," John's companion said, who had introduced himself as Commander Douglas, of her Majesty's ship ——, and who, John afterwards found, was uncle to the young Lieutenant Douglas Major Cornwall had with him when they first met in Canada. "The country is nearly as pretty as Devonshire, when we look at it from our ships," Mr. Douglas said ; "but I am afraid the poor fellows find there is deadly poison mixed up with all this beauty. Look at those two asses"—and he pointed to a guardsman and a Zouave who were walking lovingly together, with their hands and arms full of plums and cucumbers. "They will eat those things till they have no room left for more, and then get raki (peach brandy) to qualify it. Is it any wonder they die by scores ?"

"Can nothing be done to prevent it?" said John.

"Not more than is done. At times like these it does not do to punish and depress the men too much."

They were getting near the camp, and making their way through groups of soldiers and natives. John was surprised at hearing his name repeated, and had often turned to see who spoke ; but seeing only strange

faces, he went on again, till an old native, holding up some very fine greengages, said, "Bono Johnny."

"How on earth does he know me?" said John, turning to his companion in amazement.

"Oh, that is what the rascals call us; it is the name we have all got, from a general officer down to a middy."

On reaching the Major's tent, they found him away. The servant said he thought his master would soon return, for he had only gone a few steps to visit a sick friend. They entered the tent to rest, and smiled as they saw about them the signs of the owner's prevailing tastes,—lots of pipes, and a flute, with pieces of music. They did not remain by themselves long, for the Major soon came back. He was surprised and pleased to see both John Davies and Mr. Douglas. After the first courtesies of welcome had passed, he drew John on one side and told him Captain Vaughan's tent was not far distant, and he was lying in the extremity of fever. His agonies of remorse were fearful to witness, Major Cornwall said, when he was sane, and when the paroxysms of delirium were on him he seemed to be haunted by Nelly.

"What can I do?" John said. "I want to speak to him about her, and yet I would not agonize a dying man, if it could be avoided; but the dishonour on Llewellyn's name can be cleared away by a word from him, and I must see him and get the truth from him."

They consulted the doctor, who, after seeing Cap-

tain Vaughan again, gave his consent that John should visit the Captain's tent, though he said he would find him quite insensible, and unable to think of the past or answer any questions. He reminded him, too, of the risk he ran by watching such a sick bed, but added, if he did not fear infection, he was welcome to go.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

WITHOUT a moment's hesitation John prepared to follow Major Cornwall to the tent where Vivian was lying. He had refused to be removed to the hospital, and when John entered with the doctor and the Major he lay on his camp bed, restless and ghastly, in one of the shivering fits of the fever. He had never been a kind master, and his servant was easily persuaded to resign the post of tending him, and letting John take the duty, preferring the outside of the tent to the inside of it at present, as he had the doctor's orders for doing so.

Vivian's eyes wandered, but he did not recognize either of the three gentlemen who had entered the tent. He lay muttering a word now and then, and striving to move, but he was too far gone to be able to raise himself. With his hands only he seemed to have the power of motion, and caught nervously every minute at the covering of the bed.

Major Cornwall whispered to John, "You are determined, then, to remain here?"

"Yes," said John, in the same low tone; "as the doctor gives his consent, I will stay. I am a better nurse than most men. At one time I began to study for the medical profession, but afterwards gave it up; so I am not so unfit for the post as you think."

"Well, do as you please; but as you will not come back to dine with me, I shall send my man round with something for you to eat here."

"Thank you," said John; "I will not refuse that."

"All right," the Major said. "I must be off now, or Douglas will think I am using him very roughly."

John turned to the doctor, who while they were talking had been trying to get some medicine down the sufferer's throat, but in vain. The handsome head lay back on the pillow, the soft rich hair matted together with the death-damp. No woman's hand had touched or helped him in his weakness, and the dust of the tent made everything dirty about him. The doctor could do no more; he stood looking at him for a few moments; then said, "Poor fellow! he will not last much longer. I have a great many others to see. I will look in again after I have been my rounds, before I turn in; but I have been at work two days and nights without sleep, and I must have some rest."

"It is a terrible time for you," John said; "depend on my doing everything in my power."

"Thank you," the doctor said; and giving John a few instructions, the man of physic went on his dismal

way, and left John Davies alone with Nelly's husband.

John turned to the bed ; there was no recognition in the face as it gazed on him. With a gentle though firm hand he laid the poor fellow in a more comfortable position. The eyes looked at John with a wondering stare, and then wandered around the tent. His parched lips murmured, "Nelly !" Perhaps the relief John had given by moving him, and the face connected with his home, made him dream of that home once more ; for he smiled. John bent over him in the hope of catching one word. The sick man gazed at him again, but this time with a gleam of returning consciousness. A change had come over his dream, and a ghastly horror spread itself over the emaciated face. He clung to the bed-clothes with a clutch of despair, and with the last effort of expiring life shrieked out, "Dying ! Oh God ! not dying ! Nelly, save me !—falling ! falling !" The last word was almost a whisper, and he lay so still, John thought all was over. Not yet. He lay for half an hour in fearful agony, and then the soul parted from that beautiful form which had been its pride and boast through this life, and entered on another life, with all that dark mass of moral deformity to begin his new existence with. John stood for a few minutes after all was still, and looked more in sorrow than in anger on the life so early cut off from repentance or amendment. John knew him to be the destroyer of one sweet life that the good Father had sent into this world, rich

with all promise of happiness ; but that was not all. Few as the years of the bad man had been, he left behind him the trail of many a dark sorrow. And for Nelly, one of his victims, was there no hope, no light, no word to guide the earnest friend—her father's friend—no word ? “ Where, where art thou, my poor child ! ” escaped from John's lips as he turned slowly to leave the neglected tent.

Vivian Vaughan's friendships in life had never been from that class where true friends are found, and when death came to him in that fearful shape they fled from him in fear, leaving his last hours of misery to be tended by an unwilling service. The man-servant called in some coarse women, camp followers, who did the last offices for the dead ; and so the wicked son of the haughty mother was prepared for the military funeral.

CHAPTER XL

JOHN DAVIES would have liked to go on with his friend Major Cornwall, and to have seen something of the excitement and chances of war ; but an opportunity offered for his return to Constantinople, and he thought it best to avail himself of it.

John was a different man now from the slovenly student we first met at the Curate's cottage. He was one of nature's gentlemen, and only wanted the refining

influence of association to convince him of the advantage of beautifying as well as ennobling the position we have, not repining and waiting for that which is above us or beyond us. His journey back to England was exciting and pleasant; for all that part of the world through which he travelled was astir with life and hope. John felt what a unit he was in the great whole; he felt, too, how much each unit can do to help forward the Father's plans, and mentally dedicated himself anew to a life of labour and goodness. He had in his wanderings seen many touching incidents in life, and had learnt to feel himself more a part of the universal humanity than he did in his self-enjoying life in his Welsh home, with the atmosphere of Nelly's love about him, and the hope, absorbing his own soul, of taking that love into his life. He did not love Nelly less, but he loved her differently, and he loved all God's creatures more.

At the close of a hot, dusty August day, John found himself at the London Bridge railway terminus, just come up with a number of other passengers from Dover. All hurried from the carriages and assembled round the pen into which the boxes were being tumbled. "That's mine," shrieked out an old gentleman, red in the face already with anticipated impudence from somebody. "I told you I'd get it." This was said with a wink to a meek-eyed little woman who seemed to have implicit faith in him; but the property he so much wished to have was being buried under fresh loads of boxes. He could not stand that.

"Here, you, I say," poking one of the porters, as he was stooping, with a sharp stick; "that's mine, I say." "All right," was the cool reply from the man, who still felt the sharp poke, but who nevertheless deposited a still heavier box on the top of the pile. "Well," uttered the irascible old person, turning to his female friend, "Well, I never!" "Nor I," she had just time to say, when the sounds, "By your leave, by your leave, gentlemen," came sweeping down upon them, and a truck heavily laden sent the whole party of expectants spinning in all directions. The old gentleman for some time was nowhere, and the old lady picked herself up from a remote corner, where she had fled for safety, sitting on some one's carpet-bag. In the mean time John and the other patient ones, who had been quietly watching their chance, got their luggage without much trouble, the old gentleman's turning up the last of all; but by that time he was a subdued man. Still, when possessed of it, he looked triumphantly at his feminine admirer, and sticking the old lady's arm in his, whispered, "I told you I'd get it!"

Perhaps the old couple went home to tea and shrimps, with a glass of something hot afterwards, because of the journey. John, however, got on the top of a Kennington omnibus, with his small quantity of luggage beside him, and for the few minutes he sat there amused himself with a fraction of the world from that point of view. London Bridge was taking a doze, for it was between eight and nine o'clock, in the twi-

light of a long summer's day. An east wind had prevailed for some time, making everything dry and dusty and gritty. The stream of living beings had lost all its smartness. The numbers were made up of the overworked, the tired, weary ones. The trim young clerks had long ago gone to their thousand homes—for there are thousands of happy homes within a walk of London Bridge—made glad by loving mothers, and sweet young sisters, and, dearer still, the betrothed ones, who have such boundless trust in the future. The spirit of "Micawber" is, after all, a very useful one in this working, disappointing world; for what would become of all the lovers if they did not believe something would soon "turn up" for them in the chances of life? And so, being imprudent ones, with warm, loving hearts, they fall in love, and get engaged and married, believing in the something that will come to help them, and bring upon themselves all sorts of domestic troubles, and toil through life after a fashion, dragging with them many children, who, fulfilling the same conditions, make up what might be called the *mess* of the population; and yet there are a great many smart young lovers to be found among them, who are just going to begin and fulfil their lot, and grow dusty and weary, like the rest.

CHAPTER XLI.

"KENNINGTON, Kennington!" called out the conductor, a man, apparently, of unflagging spirits; for even at this late hour of his day's work he looked on the funny side of life. Perhaps he had a kind wife preparing a nice little supper for him, and the coming event cast its pleasure before. Certain it is, he appeared to John a much happier mortal than the coachman. Just as they turned out of the broad way from the station into the Borough, he spied a bewildered-looking woman calling to him. "Hold hard, Bill—there's one. Yes, Miss, all right;" and he was off the steps in a minute and by her side, conducting her to the door. "Oh lor'," said the poor woman in a tired voice, "Kensington you're going to, ain't you?" She said this with one foot on the step. The conductor's look of contempt was superb. "Where was yer ris, an' what can yer mother be about to let a creature like you wander through this vide world with so few brains?" Then, seeing her weary look, he said good-naturedly, "You'll get a Kensington one over the Bridge." Raising his voice to the driver, "All right, Villiam—a case of mistaken hidentity in the young 'oman."

"Don't you make sich a fool o' yourself. You do more maggin' in one day than is good fer yer," the coachman replied in a surly tone.

"You are a pleasant party, you are," the conductor

jerked back, swinging himself round and calling out for customers ; but they did not stop again until they came to the house where Mr. Morgan and his family were lodging.

CHAPTER XLII.

Now comes the tug of packing, which seems to me quite as intelligible as the tug of war ; and Bessie and Bridget were often bewildered with what to do next. John and Mr. Morgan were much in the City and at the Docks, and finally fixed on a ship which I shall call the "Cape Hen," because I do not know of any ship by that name, and I do not wish any to think I am talking about any old ships or shipmates. Sailors are very good fellows, but a nearer companionship with them has taken much of the romance away through which in my young days I loved to think of them. Marryatt and Cooper have much to answer for, or perhaps it is best to think there is every variety of character to be found among sailors—noble, generous, kind, self-sacrificing, gentlemanly men, as well as tyrannical bullies, sporting their brief authority to the discomfort of every one near them. My own experience is, that they are much given to mar the Queen's English and maltreat small boys. The "Cape Hen" was not a flush deck fore and aft. You ascended to

the quarter-deck by a companion-ladder, keeping that sacred part of her comfortably away from the plebeians below. When you are near the top of the tree it is best to stand up for exclusiveness: "Come not near me, I am genteeler than thou." There must be something in it, the feeling is so universal; and it is capitally illustrated in colonial life, though, to say the least, its restrictions are eccentric.

John Davies and Bessie Morgan, though knowing nothing of *a set*, were exclusive in their own way; they liked to select from the world around them a small knot of dear and well-chosen friends, whose sympathies and early associations were similar to their own. With such they could go on their laughing, happy way through life, and not murmur and long to push themselves into some other circle who did not want them, or perhaps did not appreciate them. The whole of life's joys were not lost to them; they could be cheerful and happy and thankful yet, in spite of the great sorrow that had come upon them. They believed in a future life, and therefore their dead were not lost to them. They believed in a good and loving Father's care, and their Nelly was resigned into His hands with holy trust. Still they equally believed their work in life was to seek her by all means in their power.

Mrs. Llewellyn was the only one who was greatly changed. She had lost her bustling habits, and sat still and silent for hours together deep in thought, with perhaps a piece of netting in her hands as an excuse

for not being idle. Her mental faculties were active as ever, and she entered into all the anticipations of the journey with great interest; for while they were doing something, there was hope. She had more belief in meeting Nelly among the Australian emigrants than any of them, because she remembered many conversations in which Nelly had expressed a great desire to go there. And she thought there were great facilities for travelling between America and Melbourne, owing to the trade transacted between the places.

One morning, a few days before sailing, while the "Cape Hen" was in the docks, Mr. and Mrs. Morgan and John Davies went on board to make some arrangements. The saloon looked as comfortable as saloons generally do look when the ship is in the docks, with its splendid velvet pile carpet and hangings to match, papier-maché panels to the cabin doors, and much gilding and paint shining and bright. In the still water, and with the cheerful sunshine coming through the skylight, it was quite a tempting-looking place, and hopeful Bessie thought how happily they could get on in that snug cuddy; but she had to learn from experience that the carpet and hangings would disappear when they left the docks, and would be seen no more until the ship arrived in Melbourne, when they would be again displayed to beguile other unwary travellers into the notion that snug comfort might be found on board ship. The "Cape Hen" had no stern cabins, but broad sofas arranged round for the accommodation of the ladies on board. Mrs. Llewellyn's

cabin, in which Bridget was also to sleep, was at the top of the saloon next to the sofas ; Mr. and Mrs. Morgan's next ; then John Davies's ; and beyond on that side two others ; before you came to one occupied by the captain, which had a window on the outside overlooking the companion-ladder and the lower deck. While Mr. Morgan and John were busy with their hammer and nails making placés for many things as Bessie wished to have them, she walked round the saloon and read the names of the passengers on their cabin doors. Next to John's was a Miss Digby and a Miss Kate Digby ; between them and the captain, a Dr. and Mrs. Dduff. They come from Wales, thought Bessie. On the other side she read the names of Mr. Primley, Mrs. Primley and family. Dr. M'Clean also she knew was the doctor of the ship. There were the names of several other gentlemen which she read and soon forgot.

While thus engaged, a party entered the saloon. It consisted of three children and their parents. The father, whom the children much resembled, was a large and strange-looking man. He had a very insecure walk, and suggested the idea that his feet were so fat at the bottom that he could not tread firmly. The children, two girls and a boy, were wonderfully smart, and dressed in a style more fit for a walk in the park than in the docks. The girls, who might have been ten and eight years old, wore that kind of white frock covered with open work and crinolines that made them nearly the shape of open fans.

The boy, a child between six and seven, in his knickerbockers and very round hat, looked like a Dutch sailor on a small scale. The children, young as they were, evidently watched their chance to sneak away (as the boys would say), which they soon succeeded in doing, leaving the heavy father with his wife leaning on his arm in the middle of the saloon. The lady—how shall I describe her? I feel the difficulty, because I know my readers will say it is not natural, and yet I can see her now as she stood that day—long as well as thin, worn and seedy, yet affecting all the airs of fashion, whatever they may be, overworked and overdressed. The thin, narrow face and figure looked as if it must have been squeezed either by physical or mental pressure; and the nose, a narrow, high Roman one, sniffed the air as though she was afraid she might detect vulgarity even in the sofa cushions. She had worked hard—hard as a charwoman—to support that inert mass of manhood by her side, and would do so still, as long as the world around her would believe in her intense respectability. She herself believed she was a scion of one of the families that came in with the Conqueror. Perhaps her Roman nose might help her to trace with accuracy her genealogy. At any rate, I don't think Roman noses were much in use among the Saxons; and there was no mistake about her nose. It was a very important member: she spoke through it, and laughed through it. Her heart never seemed to laugh. She was always too much on the look-out for genteel appearances, and yet she must

have thought the effect of a mild laugh good, for she seldom spoke without a little giggle; still the heart had nothing to do with it; it was got up entirely by the head, and echoed through the long nose, producing a very irritating stimulus to pugnacity. As she walked up the saloon she saw the sofa, and threw herself upon it with every outward appearance of fainting. Bessie cast a furtive look at her, but for a wonder did not offer her assistance. As no one took any notice of her lady-like weakness, she soon recovered and looked around with a grand air, just as the chief mate came in, who, raising his cap as he passed Bessie, went on to the lady on the sofa. He was a tall, strong, blue-eyed man, with black hair and whiskers, on which a great amount of bears' grease had been wasted; for nature had made him oily enough, if he had but been aware of the fact. He was kind and courteous in his manner to ladies; slightly shy and on his dignity with gentlemen, though willing to do any one a good turn if he could, and not a very great tyrant to the boys; so, on the whole, for a sailor, a very good fellow.

"One of the men told me you wished to speak to me," he said, addressing himself to the lady on the sofa.

"Yes, my name is Primley." It must have been a facetious idea, for a small laugh faintly sounded somewhere in the nose. The mate did not seem to see it, and stood with a rising colour. Was she laughing at him, he thought. The lady went on: "Hi wish to

make some inquiries about hour sleeping accommodation."

I do not know if the Normans, among other blessings which they brought to Britain's shores, introduced confusion among the "H's," but certain it is Mrs. Primley was an illustration of what can be done in that way ; when she was most emphatic she triumphed most.

Mr. Watson, the mate, whose time was very much occupied, stared at her for a minute, and then said curtly—"I shall be happy to do what I can for you ; but your berths have been assigned to you for days, and no one has been to look after them. I cannot tell what you want done to them ; you must see to your arrangements yourselves now ; I have no time to waste. Unless you send some one on board to put up your bunks, you will be in great confusion ; the ship's carpenter cannot see to it until we are down the river, and perhaps not then." He raised his cap, and muttering something about having no time, walked quickly away.

Mrs. Primley looked up hopelessly at Mr. Primley, who seemed to be intently studying the curtain-pole. "Ho dear, what are we to do ! Do you hear, Samuel Primley ?—and you standing there like a stock !" The lady uttered this reminder in a voice from which all thought of fainting had fled. "And that brute, too, has gone just when I wanted to speak to him !" she added, in a low, spiteful tone.

"Can I give you any information ?" Bessie said, an

amused expression stealing over her face. "The workman that arranged our cabins perhaps may be of use to you. I think you will find him still somewhere on board the ship."

Mrs. Primley was all herself again. "Ho dear, so kind of you! I ham so unaccustomed to 'elp myself; hand hi ham going to hundertake such a fearful journey for the good of my 'usband hand dear children. Hi 'ave sent away my nurse; my mamma said she was sure hi should repent doing so; but my beloved ones," with a languid smile, "hand their welfare are hall that is left to me now."

Bessie looked rather foolish; she did not exactly know what to say; so she smiled.

The lady went on. She had got the long face into its sentimental expression again, and the large upper lip well over her teeth, through which the words came mincing and soft. She was an exceedingly genteel person evidently. When alone with that lazy "ne'er-do-weel" of a man of hers, she might perhaps say some very rough words; but she was shocked at slang, even the mildest little bit of it. As they were to be fellow-passengers, she wanted to impress Bessie with her grandeur; and continued in her sweetest voice—"Hi assure you hi ham making great sacrifices, hand leaving a large circle of helegant friends, people in position, you know."

"I dare say," Bessie answered, in a slightly choking voice.

"You are very likely doing the same," murmured

Mrs. Primley. "We can sympathize with one another."

"Oh dear, no," said Mrs. Morgan, quickly. "I am not leaving many people behind that I care very much for."

"Bessie," said a voice from the second cabin, and the door opened and Mr. Morgan stood in his shirt-sleeves. Without observing the other lady, he said, "Tell me where you want these hooks put." Bessie disappeared inside the door.

"Dear me!" observed Mrs. Primley, partly to herself and partly to her husband. "The man must be a carpenter, hi suppose; at any rate, he can be no gentleman." Then raising her voice from falsetto to its true tone, she said sharply, "Samuel!"

"What do you want?" answered that large individual, rousing himself from a comfortable corner on the farthest sofa.

"What do hi want!" she echoed. "Hi want you to do something for the comfort of your family. These 'orrid men here say we must see to our own fittings."

"I will take the measurement, and send a carpenter," he answered, hurriedly opening the cabin-door, as though to escape from a matrimonial conversation.

"Take the measurement!" she repeated, contemptuously; "that's the way hall the money goes. You can do nothing for yourself."

Mr. Morgan and Bessie, having finished their work, came into the saloon; Mr. Morgan with his black coat on, trim and neat, as he always looked. They were

soon joined by John Davies. The three as they stood talking rather puzzled Mrs. Primley. The low man that had been doing his own carpenter-work looked very like a gentleman. She sank back into her most lady-like attitude, and looked unutterably genteel and helpless.

At that moment the mate re-appeared, pushing before him the three children, saying, in a tone of voice that was not to be disputed, "You go in to your mother, and don't come on deck any more to-day."

They were all evidently afraid to approach the meek, languid-looking mother, for their white worked frocks were many colours, with coal-dust and paint and tar; their gloves black with rubbing them along everything they could touch; much of the dirt and dust had been transferred to their noses, which the unusual amount of dust had irritated. As for the boy in his knickerbockers, with his fat, little, dirty legs, he was a tempting object to laugh at or shake, according to the disposition of the parents owning him. He really looked as though he had been tumbled into a tar-pot, and then rolled in cinders. They stood huddled together. Mrs. Primley caught sight of them. The long face flared up (so to speak), and with hand raised she almost sprang upon them; but, fortunately catching Mrs. Morgan's quiet eye, she paused, as she took hold of the trembling little mite; still passion was dominant, and genteel appearance in the minority. She could not help hissing through her teeth, "I'll give it you when I get home!" Knowing what her gifts were

likely to be, the poor wee, dirty, puffy miniature of his father lifted up his voice and made a most amazing noise—howled, so to speak.

“What a horrid woman!” Mrs. Morgan whispered to her husband.

“Yes,” said he, looking merrily out from under the shadow of his hat at her; “a queer specimen of our strange humanity. You are fond of the study of character—will she do for that?” Bessie raised her eyebrows slightly, a trick she had in common with Nelly.

“Poor little chap!” said John, half laughing at the woe-begone little mass of filth. He whispered to Bessie, “I should like to take him on my shoulders, and carry him off from that alarming lady.”

With a cold bow to the enraged Mrs. Primley, who had walked to the far end of the saloon, Bessie followed her husband out. John and Mr. Morgan had a few words to say to the mate about meeting the ship at Gravesend; and then they made their way back to their lodgings, tired and dusty, glad to enjoy the delight of a good wash and re-dressing; and then quite prepared to do ample justice to the soldier's tea Mrs. Llewellyn and Bridget had prepared for them.

CHAPTER XLIII.

It was on a Saturday evening in September when they took leave of the old country. Kennington Com-

mon had resolved to put on its best looks ; the shrubs in the tiny gardens on the far-side had been washed by a shower, and the sun just before his setting came out bright and warm. But it is no use trying to get up any romance about Kennington Common. Even Mrs. Llewellyn, who would never see it again in all human probability, did not care for it a bit. Mr. Morgan looked out of the cab-window at the church, for a last look. St. John's was the first church he officiated in, and therefore Kennington Common had some memories for him ; but for the rest, they were glad to be away. They had said good-bye to home when they left Wales. Their home would be found when Nelly was among them ; none said so, but all felt it. So Kennington Common gave them no heart-aches. Packed in the cab, with Bridget on the box beside the driver, away they went. Pepper sat in Mrs. Llewellyn's lap, and a great nuisance he made of himself, bouncing up and barking, with his head out of the window.

Their way was through the Borough, over London Bridge, and through Fenchurch Street to the Black-wall Railway. They intended to catch the six o'clock boat for Gravesend ; and a very unpleasant ride it was between five and six o'clock in the evening, for they met all that fraction of the city world going home to dinner or tea, as the case might be. Mrs. Llewellyn's little shrieks were always a sign for Pepper to bark ; so it was not in silent sorrow they traversed for the last time the Borough—dirty, dusty, unpleasant thoroughfare that it is. With many narrow

escapes, as Mrs. Llewellyn thought, they reached the railway, which was hissing and fuming and fussing, after the manner of all railways just before starting. Here Mr. Morgan put his wife, mother-in-law, Bridget and the dog, under John's care, telling them to look out a carriage, while he ran for the tickets. There was but one carriage left with room for so many. John told the ladies to get in, while he watched for Mr. Morgan. Mrs. Llewellyn had kept her shawl over Pepper as well as she could; for she thought if he were put into the dog-basket she should never get him again. Yet, in spite of her, he popped his head out once just as they were passing the man who opened the door. "Dogs not allowed in the carriages," he said in a monotonous tone of voice. Bessie had anticipated that, and quietly put a shilling into his hand. He did not say anything, but pretended some one called him, and he left them to get into the carriage by themselves. Mrs. Llewellyn was going to expostulate with him, but he was gone; and Mrs. Morgan said, "Get in, mamma; make haste; here are John and David." Thus urged, in went Mrs. Llewellyn, Bessie and Bridget, Mr. Morgan and John following. The man who had received the shilling had his eye upon them, for he instantly shut the door and locked it.

When they were in the carriage they saw it contained three passengers beside themselves,—one an enormously large, red-faced woman, who breathed very hard and wheezed a good deal; she could just reach her knees with her fat hands, where they rested. Two

or three plain gold rings were nearly buried in the fat of her fingers. She had a helpless look about her, as though some one had pinned her shawl around her, put her bonnet on anyhow (as she would say), and placed her there, and that there she must sit until some mechanical force was brought to bear upon the huge mass, when there might be some hope of getting her home. Her breathing was so heavy, that she could only speak in short sentences. She said, looking sideways at Mrs. Llewellyn, who sat next her, "Nasty thing!" The aroma of something stronger than water made it not a pleasant task to talk with her. Mrs. Llewellyn did not answer her. "Nasty beast!" she continued: "vy don't you get out vith it? You've no business to get in vith it, fleas and all."

"I assure you," said Mrs. Llewellyn, hastening to dispel her anxiety and vindicate Pepper's cleanliness, "he was washed and combed this morning."

"More shame for you! Oh Lord! to think of washing and combing the nasty beast! You dissarves to ketch the hydraphobe. I dissay, though you do that for the nasty dog, you never think of washing your poor soul." She wheezed a great deal after so much speaking, and looked triumphantly out of the corner of her eyes at her neighbour.

Mrs. Llewellyn looked at her in surprise; she did not see the connection. At that moment John noticed one of their fellow-passengers look up from under her veil at the old lady, who probably had taken to a little missionary exhortation, now she was too fat to

do anything else than utter short, wheezy sentences. She was one of those ladies, I should say, who refreshed herself mightily with muffins, and was great, in every sense of the word, at tea-meetings, in the company of itinerant preachers. The lady in the veil was wrapped in a large whittle shawl ; she put a little white hand out enticingly to Pepper, who immediately walked over the intermediate laps and fraternized with her. The old lady of large dimensions and passive faith groaned aloud ; the fat hands were crossed on the fatter lap, and the individual resigned herself to meditation and the shaking of the railway.

Arrived at Blackwall, there was just as much hurry-scurry to get on board the Gravesend steamer ; but, once there, Pepper was allowed to run about, much to his joy, and Bridget was ordered to look after him. As they were going down the river, the first few stars of a fine summer's night peeped out upon them. It would have been very pleasant to sit there in the twilight and glide down the river, if the boat had not been so crowded ; but there were some public gardens open for amusement at Gravesend, and many of the passengers were going there. They were not of a class to make the short journey very pleasant to quiet ladies, and Bessie was glad she had the gentlemen with her. They could not get farther than midships ; the crowd was so thick, it was uncomfortable to move ; and Bridget had had much difficulty with Pepper, whom she had captured and was holding fast, standing by the side of Mrs. Llewellyn. Close

to them a knot of young men stood smoking, and talking such utter nonsense, that Bessie would gladly have moved away if she could ; but as neither of the gentlemen seemed to think they could get through the crowd, she submitted in silence. After they had stood for some little time, a voice said to one of the noisiest and most boastful of the smokers, "Will you allow me to pass by you?"

"There is no room beyond, if that's what you want," one of them answered.

"Thank you, I will pass on, if you please," the voice said, and the crowd of noisy men parted, and allowed a lady and young girl to push through towards the stern of the steamer.

"My eye, what a guy ! Did you ever see ? Where *did* she come from ?" was uttered by more than one, who took their pipes from their mouths to stare. Many young ladies, too, with queer little hats perched on the top of their heads, sniggled and giggled at the two figures that made their way steadily on towards the part of the vessel where they wished to seat themselves.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE ladies who had caused the slight sensation on board the Gravesend packet, were very unlike any in the crowd of pleasure-seekers. The elder of the two,

a lady of middle age, was, to say the least, very odd-looking in this age of enormously developed petticoats. She was tall and slight, without any attempt at crinoline. Her plain drab-coloured dress was shortened to escape the mud or dust. She wore very fine scarlet woollen stockings and soft kid shoes made three quarters high. Her hair was cut as short as a man's, and curled all over her head, at least as much as could be seen of it under a very plain fine straw hat. And yet there was a charm about her that was irresistible; for that rough, unmannerly crowd had given way to her, and allowed herself and companion to pass through them unquestioned, as soon as the soft, musical, well-bred voice made its demand. Her companion was evidently young, but was so wrapped up in shawls and veiled, that it was impossible to see what she was like.

Mrs. Llewellyn and Bessie, seeing what could be done under the circumstances, edged their way forward by little and little, and at last succeeded in getting to the stern, where there was not quite so much pressure. They found the two ladies seated on a coil of rope behind the man at the wheel, and recognized them as their companions in the railway carriage. The elder lady joined in conversation with Mrs. Llewellyn and Mrs. Morgan; the younger, wrapped closely in her shawls, leant back against the vessel's side, with her head bent down, as though to escape observation. She raised it once or twice, but it was only to attract Pepper's attention, upon whom her soft touch seemed

to have a mesmeric effect ; for after licking her hand and rubbing his nose against her, he coiled himself up and lay down to sleep on a part of her dress, much to the relief of Bridget. After a time, when Mr. Morgan and John joined them, a whispered word from Bessie told them she had found out that the ladies were Miss Digby and Miss Kate Digby, on their way, like themselves, to join the "Cape Hen." John and Mr. Morgan were introduced, and on going from one ship to the other, Miss Digby accepted John's kind help. The heavy luggage had been sent on board while the ship was in the docks ; but still there remained many little things to gather together and look after, the boat and boatmen to deal with ; and in the midst of it all, Miss Digby seemed thankful to have found a gentleman to help her through her troubles. The evening had closed in when John handed the ladies up the ladder that had been arranged for the accommodation of the passengers, and they found themselves on the deck of the "Cape Hen." The younger lady seemed almost inclined to turn and claim John's protection when she stepped down among the melée that crowded the deck. They were late to come on board, and arrived just as all those who were for the shore were hurrying away. The confusion when a large ship is just starting for a voyage, is perhaps the most amazing thing of its kind in the world. How it ever falls into order is another great wonder. "Will you give my niece your arm, and see her to the saloon, Mr. Davies?" Miss Digby said to John. "You had

better stay there, Kate, till I come to you," she added, addressing her niece.

"With pleasure," John said ; "but can't I help you with those things you have?"

"Oh no, thank you," she said cheerily. "I shall find some one to do it, and be with you in a few minutes."

John drew the little hand through his arm, which trembled sadly when he touched it. He tried to reassure her with the hope, drawn from his own experience, that things would mend every day, and prophesied she would be quite fond of sea-life before she left the ship. A short, stifled sob was the only answer he got, as he found a seat for her. When she looked up and raised her veil to thank him for his care, he saw a young face with every feature swollen in it; for she had been crying bitterly all day,—a good honest, hearty cry, that would relieve her child-heart, and enable her to rise above her sorrows, and turn to life's work with a will when it was over. He also saw heavy coils of golden-coloured hair falling neglected on a little white neck, and great dark hazel eyes, with very long eyelashes. Just then the aunt came in, and he gave up his charge to her rightful protector and joined his own friends, who were standing near their cabin-door. Bessie had a curious little smile on her face ; but she only said, "We have put your things in your cabin, John ; they were brought in with ours."

There was dire confusion on the opposite side of the cuddy, where Mrs. Primley reigned supreme. Mr.

Primley might be an indolent man in the way of business and getting on in the world, but he certainly was not in matters concerning babies. He must have been intended for a nursery-maid, and through some mistake came into the world a large, pasty-looking man-child. As he advanced in life, his mission seemed to be babies ; for he not only had a great many himself, but dragged them about after him everywhere, fed them on everything he could lay his hands on, and, when he was obliged, whipped them at his wife's command, to keep her quiet. He was in the thick of it now, for there were two little ones smaller than the boy we saw in knickerbockers,—one about three, and the youngest, who did not look a year old. I am thankful my experience does not enable me to say what they did inside their two cabins ; but from sundry sounds of wailing it might be inferred peace did not reign there. I have great contempt for Solomon, and also for those who quote him as an authority in the matter of rods and childhood ; mine is a kind of sarcastic, cynical feeling towards thrashing fathers and mothers and school-keepers who have poor wee things under their control, not altogether from unmixed sympathy with the boys and girls, I must confess—for I have sometimes thought a beating would really do that boy good, when some particular urchin has “riled my dander” (as the Yankees would say) beyond endurance. But if pity for the children did not keep me from beating, a sense of the ridiculous would do it,—the incongruity of things. Fancy some lovely

girl in a ball-room that your eye has followed with admiration, soft, dove-like, angelic-looking as she is,—fancy her developing into an angry woman, with a stick in one hand and a small writhing specimen of humanity in the other,—very red in the face, too, with her exertions! If one could catch her in the act, it would take a long time to get up one's admiration for the angel again. Or some mild-looking, dignified clergyman, some minister of Jesus Christ, who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me." If I saw such an one with uplifted cane torturing a poor boy, I for one could not listen to his message of peace again. No! flogging properly belongs to a system of things that I hope is passing away; and those who flog and those who need flogging ought to be ashamed of themselves and mend their ways.

CHAPTER XLV.

CAPTAIN BLOXHAM, the captain of the "Cape Hen," had scarcely yet found time to make the acquaintance of his passengers; but he came into the saloon for a few minutes while they were partaking of a late tea. In person he was fat and short, with sandy hair and whiskers. The eyes in his round, inexpressive face were of no colour to speak of; they looked so washed out from exposure to the weather, one might suppose. Even in that short interview he managed to murder a

good deal of the Queen's English ; and looked slightly conscious that Mr. Morgan, being a parson, might catch him tripping. With John Davies he was more at his ease. Miss Digby and her niece were not at the table. They had retired to their cabin. The mate was not at the meal either ; there was too much to be done on deck. But Mrs. Primley was there in full-blown gentility. She sat on the right hand of the captain ; her cabin being the top one on that side, and Mrs. Llewellyn's place was opposite to her. The captain was sufficiently well educated to be aware to a certain extent of his own deficiencies ; but he looked upon nautical knowledge as the one thing needful for him, and had as much contempt for landmen, and their ignorance of things watery, as they could possibly have for him on land. His kind of life had made him quick in estimating character, and before tea was over he was stiff and short in his answers to Mrs. Primley ; and when she began telling him of the intensely genteel connections she was leaving, he said his duties called him away, and he made his escape on deck. The ladies soon retired, for the ship was being towed down the river by a steamer, and they were beginning to feel the motion. Mrs. Llewellyn and Bridget were the first to disappear. Pepper, who was paid for, shared their cabin. Mrs. Morgan went on deck with her husband and John, and seemed very much inclined to brave it out ; but she succumbed at last, and was soon followed by her husband.

John Davies had plenty of time to look about him

and make the acquaintance of the captain and officers ; for he was the only one of the passengers not prostrate with the horrors of sea-sickness. The next morning he and Pepper enjoyed the deck. John leaned over the side and watched the Isle of Wight fade away, and then turned to the sparkling waste of waters before him—sparkling and bright in the autumn sunshine. He thought of Nelly. Should they ever find her?—had she traversed these thousands of miles of sea alone? From many past conversations in the old cottage at Llansketty, there were reasons for thinking she might have done so ; and yet it seemed so improbable she could have gone through such hardships and still be alive, that John felt almost inclined to give up hope. He felt quite sure she could not have remained in America, for he thought he had left no likely place unexplored. He had found while seeking for her so many emigrants going to the Australias, that she might easily have gone under a feigned name among them ; and this was the only slender hope he had.

“Poor Nelly !” his heart murmured ; and his eyes wandered far, far away over those restless waves in a long silent look. Then, with a deep sigh, coming back to the things around him, he thought of the weeping girl below, and wondered what form of sorrow had wrung her young heart. He did not indulge long in idle dreams ; there were Mrs. Llewellyn and Bessie to make as comfortable as he could ; so he turned healthfully to the present. And there we will leave him,

and go back and see if we can follow Nelly in her wanderings. But for that we must begin another chapter.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE last we saw of Nelly was when Cephas Billings saw her go away in the up-river steamer. He told her to "look sharp," and without a word she obeyed. Cephas had taken her portmanteau on board. A waiter with a glance recognized it as the property of a lady, and carried it to the ladies' saloon. Nelly followed him. "Did she want a berth to Montreal?" "Yes;" and it was the first word she had spoken since she told Cephas to get her ticket. The bed-place was pointed out to her; she had her portmanteau put at the foot of the mattress, and crept in, drawing the curtains close. The woman in waiting looked at her, but did not speak. She was the daughter of a runaway slave, and had a soft heart, full of pity for the suffering. Life's experience could not harden her. She thought it best to ask no questions of the trembling girl who had come on board and crept into her berth with the unmistakable intention of hiding from observation. She had seen fair, beautiful quadroon girls bought and sold, and whipped to break their spirit and make them bend to the sensual wishes of their masters. This girl might be one of those, she

thought; and so she let her rest and escape if she could.

It was late in the afternoon when Nelly went on board; and a short time before midnight the woman drew aside the curtains, and asked her if she would take some food. The poor girl was not lying in an attitude of repose, but half sitting and leaning on the pillows, with her face buried between her hands. When the woman asked her if she could take something to eat, she raised her head, and looked at her with her large dark eyes wide open and tearless. "No, thank you," she said softly. "A little water."

The waitress brought it her, saying, "You had better take some food."

"No, no; I cannot eat," Nelly answered.

"Well, as you please," the woman said; and continued—"We shall be at Montreal in thar morning; if you want to go farther up thar river, you must change boats thar."

"Oh yes!" Nelly said eagerly. "I must go on—I must go on."

"Wall, you lie still and quiet," the woman said, in a kind voice. "I will let you know when we stop at Montreal; but don't seem too eager, or you will betray you'sel'."

Nelly looked at her, and wondered what she meant. As soon as the waitress drew the curtains, a stifling sob burst from her, and the forlorn girl sank back on the pillows. The woman stood for a minute looking

at the curtained berth, and muttered to herself, "That's a runaway, for sure. Wonder war she's cum'd from ; leastways 'tis no business o' mine. I hev' jist got tu let her go her own way, and say nofin' tu nobody." With which remark she turned to her other duties. They had to pass some falls, where the passengers must get out and go some short distance on shore. Disagreeable as it was, it did Nelly good ; for it roused her from her trance of sorrow, and made her think of the present.

The next morning's sun shone bright and beautiful, as they stopped near the landing-place at Montreal. Nelly heeded not the river with its clear, limpid waters, nor the pleasant homesteads that enlivened its shores. She only felt, "I must go on, far, far away from all I love, and lose myself among the crowd of forsaken ones." And so her eager question was when they stopped, "Is there any boat going on up the river?"

"Yes," the waitress said. "Thar is a boat 'longside for Kingston."

"I will go on board that," said Nelly.

"I will jist step across with yer tu," the good woman said, "an' carry yer porkmankee. But you'll take my advice," she whispered, "you'll not go on tu Kingston ; there's a dreffle sharp look-out kep' fer sich ez you thar. This boat thet you air goin' in stops on the t'other side of the river tu Kingston, at a village war thar is a railway. Don't you think it'll be a sight better fer you tu go on by thet 'ar, and jine the boats

further up? You will sartinly be ketched 'fore you can say, 'Wut air ye at!' if you continue your line of journey from one boat tu another."

Nelly looked at her and thought, How does she know all about me?—and yet she is mistaken, for who will seek me? But she could not speak much, and therefore did not ask any questions. She only said, "I will take your advice."

The waitress, taking on herself the responsibility, said, when they stepped on board the Kingston boat, "This young woman is tu be put on shore at Little Sackville, Sackville Heads."

A waiter, who knew something of the speaker, said, "I'll look arter her."

In a few minutes the boat to which Nelly had gone was steaming up the river. The woman looked after her from her own boat as long as she could see her; and as she looked muttered to herself, "Poor thing! poor thing! she is well-nigh crazed wi' her sorrows."

CHAPTER XLVII.

NELLY dragged her portmanteau as well as she could to a place on the deck where there were few passengers; and sitting down wearily on it, she fell into a kind of dream or trance. Her father, mother, John Davies, Bessie, passed before her. She saw the park and Miss Vaughan—the sunlight dancing on her

bedroom window ; nay, she could even smell the fragrance of the honeysuckle, as it was wafted in at the open casement ; and she saw it all with wide-open, tearless eyes. How long she sat unnoticed in that trance she never knew. She remembered a voice that said, "You get out here !" and a kind hand that steadied her across a plank. She had in after years a confused idea of having entered a railway carriage, and the relief it was to creep into its farthest corner and rest ; but beyond that she could remember nothing.

It so happened at the place Nelly landed, there was a railway begun by some very ambitious Company for shortening the distance between that part of the country and New York. But their ideas had been larger than their pockets ; and it was still in an unfinished state, going only a part of the distance. Nelly did not heed the stoppages. Want of food, fatigue and excitement combined, had reduced her to almost insensibility. Far on in the journey they stopped at a small station, named Bungtown. It was evening ; the guard looked into each carriage rather carelessly, for he thought all the passengers were gone long since. As he passed the carriage Nelly was in, he just put his lantern up to the window, and did not notice the little dark mass that was crouched in the far corner. With a cheery, "All right, Job Brown !" to the stoker, he tucked himself in his wraps. Though early in the season, the night was bitterly cold ; a sharp white frost had set in, and for the few miles farther he had to go he made himself as comfortable as he could.

The carriage in which Nelly had hidden herself was connected with another full of navvies, who were being taken on to the still unfinished part of the rail. When they stopped, it was among the lumber and litter that attend all large undertakings of the kind. There were perhaps twenty men in the railway carriage, who, with the guard and stoker, made their way over bars of iron and ruts,—and a little farther on over stumps and felled trees, holes and hillocks,—swearing and laughing, according to their different dispositions,—towards a hut which had been partly erected for the temporary shelter of the workmen, the last finished station being the only place where there was anything like inhabitants.

When they had stopped at the last station, the guard had looked into the carriages and thought they were all empty. He then shut the doors, and went on with the navvies five or six miles farther to the part of the line they were making. The twenty fresh workmen had been expected, and were welcomed by their fellows kindly enough. The hut or sort of inn was kept by a woman—a “lone woman” she called herself; but if destiny had made her lone, nature had made her large, and in every sense of the word a strong woman, mind and body, gaunt withal. There was no superfluous fat about her; life was much too real and earnest for that. Her garments of coarse woollen cloth were narrow and short. Her legs were encased in grey worsted stockings and very thick men’s half-boots. On her shoulders she wore a thick

shawl wrapped across and tied behind. The head coming from out of it, I shall decline to describe minutely ; just hinting that she did not possess a comb or brush, and the black mane stood up stiff with dirt two or three inches high all over it. The features of the face were large and coarse, but not altogether savage or cruel. She was generally known to the workmen by the name of Long Bess. Besides herself, there were running about the hut some most remarkable specimens of young America, calling her mother. She was a woman of few words ; and when the party of men arrived at the hut-door she was standing near an enormous fire, with a frying-pan in her hand that required all her attention to keep it from taking fire. She looked round as the men entered, and nodded to the guard, with the words, " Well, Tekle Pekin !" and then turned to the pan, which she " dratted " between her teeth ; but the bacon frizzled away and flared up in spite of her, and by its delicious smell attracted some of her young savages around her. " Be off, ye born hungry devils, before I burn ye !" was her next exclamation, holding up with her disengaged hand a piece of flaming stick ; at which threat they all made off in double-quick time, mingling with the knot of men standing near, and peeping with hungry, elf-like eyes from behind some large form that shaded them. Long Bess was quick in her movements, and a table made of rough planks was soon smoking with the bacon, blue-nosed potatoes, and an enormous piece of buffalo beef, fished out of a great caldron with an iron

prong, and put on the table without a dish. Some of the men had a tin plate or wooden platter of their own, and all possessed a pocket-knife ; so the onslaught on the eatables became general.

There was one peculiarity about Long Bess—she never aggravated her natural passions by strong drink ; and as she did not want it herself, she would not keep it for others. “Na, na,” she was wont to say ; “them’s bustin’ fer the cussed stuff mon git it fer thar sels.” But she had got some most atrocious tea in a pot by the side of the fire, from which she filled the men’s pannikins ; giving it to them with a satisfied air, though nothing under heaven could be nastier. The guard, Mr. Tekle Pekin, seemed to think he could improve the flavour of it ; and winking solemnly to his next neighbour, he called the eldest hope of the landlady to him, a boy of about eleven, who at that moment had just bitten into a long tough slice of the beef, and was pulling at it with both hands. A respectable dog with a bone would have been a much more cleanly animal.

“Here, you hollow piccaninny,” Mr. Tekle said ; “you take this key an’ rin tu the rail, an’ look into the last car, an’ under the seat maybe you’ll find summat ; wut you see thar you bring slick ’long tu me, an’ I’ll guv you a lot o’ lollies thet I’ve got.”

The boy, still holding fast to the beef, nodded his head, his mouth being too full to speak, and made off across the white frozen ground. He had not been gone many minutes when his voice was heard scream-

ing with terror. "It's somethin' liven'; it's somethin' liven'!"

"Just hark, to the daft cretur," said Long Bess, looking up from a corner where she had seated herself on a log of wood, eating a lump of beef with a clasp-knife. "I'll make 'im squeel wen he cums nigh me, I've a notion." This she uttered, glaring up at the door, as the boy burst it open. His white face and trembling limbs shewed his terror was real, and the men clustered round him and saved him from a blow his mother aimed at him. She always beat her children first and listened to their story afterwards, because she said "thur wuz no ketchen' of 'um wen they'd sed thar say; you'd hev' tu git up airly tu be ez slick ez them creturs wuz."

Mr. Tekle Pekin stood between Long Bess and the boy. "You sot yourself down agin, mother," he said, in a coaxing tone of voice. "I'm darned if thet thar lump o' buffalo wunt be cold fat afore it gits intu your inside. Leave the boy tu me; I'll settle him in drefle quick time." Mr. Tekle was a favourite with the lady, so she went growling back to her log, keeping an eye on the boy, however. "Now, you young Ruhamar, wut skeered ye this time?"

The boy had left off eating the beef, though he still clutched hold of it with one hand, with the other he cleared up his tears and sniffs. Finding himself in the midst of living beings, and for the moment a sort of hero with something to tell, he tried to answer all their questions at once. "Here's how it wuz. I got

intu the car, an' wuz feelin' fur Tekle's things, wen it ketched holl o' me. By golly! I wuz streaked. I thought it wuz the evil one." When he had got thus far, he looked behind him with a frightened look; but seeing so many human spirits with bodies to them he took heart again, Tekle giving him a fillip by saying, "Aint you tellin' a buster?" "Taint a lie," the boy sobbed out. "It ketched holl' o' me, an' it cried, an' it moaned; an' I clear'd right out from thet car, an' made tracks ez quick ez I could."

"Ruhamar," said Long Bess, looking over Tekle Pekin's shoulder, "war du you 'spects you'll go tu, you dreffle lying young varmin?"

"Stan' back, Bess; it beats holl natur' wut he ses; but I aint goin' tu miss my night-cap this here way."

While he had been talking he had prepared a lantern, and some of the other men had followed his example, and now went out with him towards the railway carriages. The night outside the hut was bitterly cold; for though the Canadian winter had not quite set in, the frosty nights had been very sharp, and the men knew they should soon have to give up work. Indeed, it was to get some particular piece of work finished before the frost of winter set in that so large a number of workmen had been sent on the line.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THOUGH the boy's story had been laughed at by the men, they were nevertheless curious on the subject, and as they hurried over the hard ground, stumbling over the many obstacles they met, they speculated as to what sort of animal or ghost they were likely to encounter. Some of the more cautious ones had caught up sticks or any other weapon that came in the way. All allowed Mr. Tekle Pekin to lead the mob. It was more his business than any one's to see what or who was in the carriage. Ruhamar had slinked back into the hut, preferring being rated by his mother to meeting again the creature whom he at least knew was no fiction of his fancy. Mr. Tekle Pekin was much amazed, for he knew he locked the door of the car when he left the rail, and thought the boy must be under some delusion. "Wall, now," he said, with his hand on the handle of the door and a twinkle of fun in his eye, "'spose I lets one o' Lucifer's imps out 'mong yer; wud yer tackle him, du yer think? coz if yer like, yer kin guv him a lickin,' an' I'll look on an' see fair-play." He grinned round on them, and then opened the door. Something fell forwards. "By the everlasting wonder," burst from him, "it's a woman! There, take the lantern," he said to one of the men pressing close on him, "an' I'll lift her up; she ain't very big. Wall, it beats me all to cus how she got in thar, Tim," he said, addressing a young

Irishman near him. "Guv us a 'and, an' some on yer shew a light." The men clustered round, holding up their lanterns. They lifted her from the railway carriage, and rested for a moment to get her in a better position for carrying. The limbs fell powerless by her side. Her hat and veil dropped off, and the long glossy hair lay on the ground and got whitened with the snow that was slowly falling.

"She's dead for sure," some of the men said.

"We wun't say thet till we've tried Bess's fire an' my brandy," Tekle said. "An' thet puts me in mind o' thar brandy; one on yer's look under the seat an' bring thar flask 'long."

"Gently, Tekle," said Tim; "I kin carry her;" and he took Nelly up in his strong arms as easily as a mother would a baby.

"I'll rin on an' tell Bess tu git a mattress tu the fire," Tekle said; and, suiting the action to the word, ran on to the hut.

When he told the story to the woman, she said in an angry voice, "Wut's the use o' bringing a dead woman in here? I ain't goin' tu be mixed up wid yer murders."

"You'll be the one tu murder," Tekle answered in an eager voice, "if ye wun't guv yer help; an' more an' thet, we air goin' tu bring her in thar."

As the coarse, dirty mattress was thrown down before the fire, the scuffle of men's feet was heard at the door, and Tim entered with his burden.

"It wun't du tu put her tu near thar fire," some one

suggested ; and the mattress was raised on to the table, on which Tim laid her. "Some on yer guv us a coat, mates," he said ; and making a pillow of two or three that were offered, he laid the young head upon it. The men clustered round, gazing with wonder at what they had found, Bess being among them. There she lay, the good old Curate's darling child, the eagerly sought prize of wicked love, the worshipped idol of one true heart ! Like the lost lamb in the wilderness, the Good Shepherd was guiding her on, through the paths He liked best, to that home where her father waited.

Tim, with his almost giant's frame and great strength, had hardly felt her slight weight, and he now stood by her side, looking at her with a sort of wonder. He perhaps never understood what the word beautiful meant before. The prettiest girl he had ever known was nothing like that. He took the small hand and laid it on his, and looked at it silently. Tekle was warming a flannel shirt of his by the large blazing fire. He was a married man and the father of a young family, and lost no time in looking at the inanimate form ; but having made the flannel hot, unfastened her dress and put it on her chest, bidding the others rub her hands. "An' you, mother," he said to Long Bess, "you take off the boots an' stockings, an' put them flat-irons thet you hev ready fer ironing my shirts wid, put them tu her feet. Not thet way, 'oman ; you'll skin her feet thet way ; wrap the shawl round 'em." Tim stepped forward, and slightly push-

ing the woman away, took the white little feet in his rough hands, and carefully protecting the irons with the woollen shawl, wrapped them up. He seemed in an amaze of wonder, but touched her so gently, he would not have disturbed an infant's slumbers. They got a little brandy down her throat. Whether it did her good or not, Tekle said, "'twas the only thing they'd got tu guv her." They also rubbed her chest and feet with it, having great faith in its restorative power. The friction perhaps did as much good as the spirits. While doing this, they observed the costly garments in which she was dressed; for when Nelly left her home, she had thrown a long cloak over the dress she happened to be wearing, and put on her garden hat, which was made for a sun-shade and hid her face entirely.

Vivian, who always thought a handsome present could compensate for cruel words, had been most lavish in his gifts to her. When he came repentant and besought her to accept them, she could not wound him by refusing, though she had shed many a bitter tear over them in solitude. For the same reason, the hope of pleasing him, she always wore some of them. He had given her large sums of money, too, in the first flush of his love, to make purchases with, which she had not spent: and though in her despair she thought little of her future wants, she took that which was her own, though she would not touch a penny of the money Sir Harry offered her. The money and jewels went into a small compass, too, and she

put them into her portmanteau when gathering up a few necessaries to take with her. As Tim and the people around her were rubbing her hands, they noticed her rings, and among them the wedding-ring, and then they wondered and speculated more than ever. When Tekle unfastened her dress to put the hot flannel to her chest, he looked for a moment at the costly brooch, watch and chain, before he handed them over to the care of Long Bess, who by this time had become interested in her guest. She could pay, at all events, for the trouble she gave, she thought.

When Nelly began to shew some signs of life, Tim looked uneasily at her, and with a half-frightened look picked up her cloak, which had fallen on the floor and covered her figure with it; then glancing at Tekle, said, "Shall us go?" with a motion of his head indicating the other room. Tekle took the hint, and persuaded some of the men who still loitered near to go with him.

I think I said the hut consisted of two rooms, the one they were in being the kitchen and feeding-room; it served also for sleeping-room for Long Bess and her children, whose bed-places were, like the bunks in a ship, fastened to the wall. The other room was a large, barn-like place, and was more especially the room belonging to the navvies, where they all slept somehow, heedless of the rough accommodation, for their sleep was the deep sleep of labour. It was past the time of turning in now, and they went to their own quarters when Tekle proposed it, some to smoke, some to bed.

There was a large fire-place at the end of the room, with a log burning in it more like a tree with the top branches cut off than fire-wood, but so glowingly alight that it was not likely to go out for days. Round this some of the men clustered, smoking, and talked of the girl and her jewels, Tim and Tekle among them. In the other room Nelly still lay where they had placed her; but her eyes were wide open and gazing with a frightened stare at the gaunt figure of Long Bess, who was making up a rough bed in one corner of the room near the fire.

The woman thought she had done something particularly comfortable, and turned to Nelly with the words, "Cum now, you're gotten quite slick and sarsey; guess you've missed t'other world by a small piece, tho'." She raised Nelly in her arms as she spoke. The poor girl put up her hands to gather the tangled masses of her hair together; but she had not power to hold it. She glanced at her unfastened, disordered dress, and tried to cover herself with her cloak; but the effort was too much for her, and she fell almost fainting into the strong woman's arms. Bess laid her on the bed she had made, covered her with the cloak and what things she could spare, and then stood looking at her.

CHAPTER XLXIX.

THERE was no inside communication between the two rooms of the hut. The navvies' room had been added to the one room occupied by Long Bess and her family when the work on the railway made it necessary to provide some shelter for the workmen. The doors of both rooms were front doors, so to speak. As the woman stood looking at the girl, there was a slight tap at the door of her room. Long Bess opened it, and Tim and Tekle came quietly in. They seemed to understand one another, for none of them spoke. Bess jerked her head towards the fire-place, and they walked forward and stood looking at the bed where Nelly lay. Her large dark eyes were open, flashing and bright, her cheek burning, and muttered words came from her parched lips, which they could not understand. "Thet's thar fever comin', I 'spects: 'tarnal bung, I can't hev her thar long," Bess said. "I tell ye wut 'tis, Tekle; you'll hev tu go tu the good ladies of St. Ann's, 'tain't more nor four nor five mile, an' jist tell 'em holl about it. Last year they nussed the young 'uns thru thar sm'pox, an' they sort 'niver says no tu a poor body, night nor day. I'll rus up Ruhamar an' guv un a lantern, and he'll shew ye right slick thru th' wood, an' then up the gully: 'tain't no use a having her," pointing to Nelly, "left thar; she'll go off the hooks, by golly, pretty smart, an' we shall be had up for murder."

"I'm willin'," Tekle said, "an' Tim kin stan' by you; fer sum o' them fellers in thar," pointing with his thumb to the other room, "sez they cud tak' ez much care of the gal's trinkets ez you cud."

"I ain't goin' to cheat nobody, cuss 'em!" Bess growled out; and in truth, with all her roughness and dirt, she was honest, and the thought of her responsibility quickened her wish to be rid of Nelly. She went to Ruhamar's filthy bed-place, and shook that young gentleman, who seemed very much inclined to howl; but her double fist and a gesture of silence made him change his mind. He was bundled out of his hole ready dressed, for the trifling luxury of changing their clothes for bed was unknown to the small fry whom Bess had to push through the world. Tim threw his own rough coat over the boy's shoulders, as Tekle was preparing the lantern, and in a few minutes the boy and man were treading the whitened ground, and making their way through the still and solemn trees of the wood.

Tim drew a stool by the fire and took out a very short black pipe, prepared to watch by Nelly's side. The woman threw herself on one of the bed-places. Nelly's trance on the deck of the steamer seemed to have returned to her; her spirit was at the old home again, by her father's side in the park. She had brought him some roses from Lady Vaughan. Vivian's name mingled with her mutterings, and then a troubled expression crept over her face. It grew more restless, and she moaned, "Mother;" again, in a louder

tone, she almost shrieked out, "Mother, come to me!" and raising herself on one elbow, gazed wildly up at Tim. "Lie still, a cushla, lie still; thim as kin do yez good 'll soon be here. I'm watchin' to tak care on yez; don't you be afeard o' me, tho' p'raps I do look a thought rough," and Tim looked furtively at his great dirty hands. He was bending forward to speak to Nelly, with his elbows resting on his knees; he did not like to move nearer to her, she looked so frightened at him, and he sat still in the attitude he was in when she first looked up at him. He sat like a child watching a bird whose every movement would cause the frightened little thing to beat itself to death against the window-glass. Tim's heart was in the right place, and made even the rough navy courteous and kind. Nelly listened to him, and then buried her face in her hands. After a few minutes she fell back, exhausted with her effort to rise. Tim lighted another pipe, and drew back a little farther into the shadow of the chimney. Long Bess sent out from where she lay some most unearthly sounds, catching herself up with sudden grunts, and then thrusting her black head out of its hole to see if Tim was all right and at his post.

About midnight the sound of wheels was heard. Tim started up and woke Long Bess, who had fallen this time into a heavy slumber. She got out of her bed with some words that sounded very like a curse, wriggled herself about in her clothes, pushed her masses of hair from her forehead, and stood ready to receive her visitor. A sort of covered car, drawn by

four horses, drew up to the door, and Tekle and the boy got down from the side of the driver. Tim, who was standing at the hut door, saw Tekle hand from the car a lady, who moved softly and swiftly over the frozen ground, and passed into the hut like a spirit of light. She was a slight figure, of middle height, dressed in light grey woollen garments, very ample and long. She had on a large warm cloak of the same material, with a hood, which she threw back on entering the hut; the head-dress she wore hid all but the sweet, mild face; it crossed the forehead and came under the chin; it was also covered by a veil made of a soft white wool which fell over her figure when the cloak was off, but now was kept close to her head by the strings of her cloak, and concealed the face still more from view. From her waist hung a large crucifix and beads. Tim pulled off his hat and shuffled his feet as the lady passed him with a kind smile and a slight salutation. Long Bess began to tell her story, and gave into the lady's hand the watch and jewels they had taken off Nelly.

"She's off her head, jist scared, an' jist nigh tu dying fer sartin, I thinks," Bess said.

The lady did not answer, but turning to the mattress on which Nelly lay, touched her kindly with her soft hand, and spoke a few soothing words to her in a low tone. She had brought some restorative with her, and the necessaries for warming it. Having persuaded Nelly to swallow a little, she took from her pocket a pencil and paper, made an inventory of the things

confided to her care, and then asked Tim's assistance to carry Nelly to the car. Sister Kathleen St. Croix had a small mattress and blankets ready for the sufferer's use, for the ladies of St. Ann's were accustomed to receive patients at all hours into the hospital connected with their house. Tim's strong arms were again in requisition. He lifted Nelly from her wretched bed, and laid her gently down as the sister told him ; then the kind voice bade them all good night, the door of the car was shut, and Nelly and the "Sister of Mercy" were driven away over the frozen ground through the silent wood, while the bright stars looked on. Bess and the two men stood for a moment looking after them, but the cold soon drove them in, Tekle and Tim to their own quarters to have some hot grog and a pipe, Long Bess to return to her slumbers, as she turned in muttering the words, "It's a good turn to be rid of her any how." Ruhamar was already asleep.

CHAPTER I.

IT will be well here to give some little account of the home to which Nelly was being taken. The House of St. Ann's, as it was generally called to distinguish it from any special convent, had been endowed by a rich heiress in the preceding generation for the benefit of a number of single ladies who were to devote themselves to works of charity and kindness. The

foundress of the establishment had been brought up in the Ursuline Convent at Quebec ; and the rules of her house, though not so strict as the convent, imposed the necessity on those accepting its shelter of devoting their lives to the education of the young, the conversion and education of the Indians, and attendance on the sick, either at the hospital connected with the house or at their own homes. The free, happy, active life these ladies led in their beautiful country establishment, made many seek admission into the sisterhood ; and much wealth had been added to the original property by bequests from those who had been received into the home. The grounds belonging to St. Ann's were very extensive, including both sides of a beautiful valley, through which a clear river dashed and sparkled over the rocks just below the pleasure-grounds, or, as it was usually called, the young ladies' garden. The house stood high up, nestling in a sort of under-cliff difficult of approach, and the road to it was cut in zigzag fashion to render the ascent less troublesome. The steepness of the road would account for their custom of driving four horses. The entrance-gate and lodge were close by the river ; so that nearly one-third of the ride from Long Bess's hut was through the grounds of St. Ann's over a well-made road. At the porter's house they entered through an iron gateway, and then commenced the zigzag avenue.

The house itself stood in a large court-yard, defended from intruders by a high wall and another elaborately-worked iron gate, which was a source of wonder and

admiration to all who saw it. Through this the car entered, and then drew up to a flight of broad stone steps. If Nelly had been in a state to observe things around her, she could not have seen much by the starlight outside, or anything inside by the one dim lamp burning near the porter's chair. Sister Kathleen got out of the carriage the moment it stopped, and ran lightly up the steps (all her movements were quick), and crossing the large hall, opened a door to the right. She was met by the lady superior, a tall, dark woman, possessing the remains of great beauty. Though her face was dark, it was soft, with quiet, dreamy eyes. Sister Kathleen spoke a few words to her, and then, after summoning a help, they walked together to the entrance-door.

The lady superior, known in the house as la mère St. Ann, said, "I have ordered a room to be prepared in the western wing. It is farther removed from the pensioners than any other part of the building; for from what the man Tekle Pekin said, I thought the fever might turn out to be an infectious one."

Sister Kathleen bowed with a look of deferential love, and directed the porter and another help to lift Nelly from the carriage. They brought her unresistingly into the house, up the broad stairs and along corridors lighted here and there by dim night-lights. At the end of a passage longer than the others, another attendant waited at an open door which led into a well-proportioned bedroom, so beautifully clean, it would have done Nelly good even to have seen it with

appreciating eyes. The person who awaited them at the door was dressed like Kathleen, only her garments were made of coarser cloth. She was a stout, kind, motherly-looking woman, and rejoiced in the name of *la mère Felicity*. "Give her to me," she said to the helps who put Nelly down just inside the door; and with her strong, willing arm round the poor girl's waist, she supported the tottering form to an easy chair. Nelly sank into it, and *la mère Felicity* held her hand; the other two ladies looked at their guest, Kathleen with a kind smile, St. Ann with an earnest, interested look. Felicity slightly raised the hand she held, thereby shewing the wedding ring. St. Ann looked at it, but said nothing. She asked Nelly if she would take a warm bath, saying she thought it a good thing for her. Nelly tried to thank her—tried to explain; but her brain was in such a whirl, she could not keep her thoughts to one subject for a minute, and her words rambled and wandered about many things.

"Never mind telling us now," Kathleen said. "Take your bath and go to bed, and tell us to-morrow."

Felicity opened the door of a kind of dressing-room, where she had prepared a hot bath, and Kathleen assisted her to help Nelly in. St. Ann went to get some medicine and nourishment. When she came back she found Nelly in her comfortable little bed, and so much refreshed that she was able to thank them intelligibly for their kindness. St. Ann felt her hand and her skin, and looked very serious.

"The doctor must see her early," she said, addressing herself to Kathleen; "and you, Felicity, had better sleep in this bed," pointing to another little bed like Nelly's on the other side of the room. She gave a parting look at Nelly, and whispered to Kathleen as they left the room, "How beautiful she is, and looks a mere child to be married—poor, unhappy one!"

As she uttered these words they passed a statue of the Virgin and the Christ: both ladies crossed themselves devoutly, and pausing before the figures, uttered with bowed heads a prayer for the wanderer they had gathered into their fold.

CHAPTER LI.

THE trade winds!—what lovely nights they bring to one's memory! The blue ocean, so very blue that an artist would scarcely dare to give the colour truthfully, even if he could at any time, much less when it was sparkling in the glow of a golden sunset. Then comes the good ship in full dress, decked with every stitch of canvas, catching the evening breeze as it freshens after the afternoon's sluggish heat. The captain's face, too, loses its scowl, and he lights his evening pipe with a satisfied air. Even the ship boys share in the general satisfaction with disinterested anticipations of coming good, though why they should, poor lads! it often puzzles me to think; for when

they do get to port, how often are they refused the liberty that would be given to a dog! Discipline is good for boys, some people are fond of saying. The phrase would match with the proverb, "Success demands respect," which might be the watchword of a clever devil. In my experience of life there is nothing that has lessened my respect for the courageous character of the sailor so much as the way in which he often treats boys when they are in his power. But this is a digression caused by the memory of the trade winds, by whose breezes the "Cape Hen" was being wafted over the summer seas when I found it necessary to take another look at her.

Tea was over, six bells had sounded, a few slipped quietly out of the cabin for the deck to catch the last tints of sundown, and to watch the rising of the moon. The night was so fine, it was a shame to stay below, some said—among them Kate Digby and John Davies.

"Are you coming, aunt?" Kate said.

"Yes, my dear, in a few minutes. Take your cloak and hood with you; it is always cold on deck."

"I shall not want it this warm night," Kate answered.

"Oh! you take it for her, Mr. Davies," Miss Digby said, who noticed John waiting near to aid in any little kindness of the sort.

John took the cloak on his arm and followed the young lady from the cabin. Mrs. Primley drew herself up with an amazing accession of self-respect.

"Thank goodness, she had no nieces to catch husbands for," she murmured in her most genteel tone as she swept into her cabin to re-organize her better half and his aristocratic progeny. Kate could not hear what was said on the other side of the cuddy table; so she accepted John's offer to steady her up the companion-ladder, and a wickedly-disposed wave passing just then tilted them the least bit over, and Kate nearly tumbled against him. Of course he could not let her go; he might have squeezed her hand to re-assure her if she was frightened; but far be it from me to enter into such minute details. All I can say with truth is, one of the little Primley girls got into high favour with her mother, and had some sweetmeats given her, for telling a long story, beginning with—"Oh my, mar, as hi pushed against 'em has they was coming hup the ladder, what do you think I saw him do?" The same wicked wave that tilted Kate up a little bit, gave great impetus to the young Primley's descent; so she could not have seen any prolonged little delicate attention. Let us hope, if the recording angels (for there must be more than one) get into some confusion about details, they lean to the side of mercy, and do not, like the Primley tribes, invent imaginary sins out of the fulness of their own hearts.

John and Kate enjoyed their walk on deck. The captain joined them after he had finished his cigar. They did not walk long before the other ladies made their appearance, one after another. Mrs. Llewellyn

came on deck leaning on Mr. Morgan's arm. Her appearance was the signal for a little bustle. The captain ordered cushions and rugs to be brought to the end of the skylight, and a comfortable seat was soon made for her. She was the oldest lady on board, and the captain had formed a great friendship for her, she was such a motherly, kind, unselfish being. Usually when the seat was made there was plenty of room for two or three more, and Bessie Morgan and Miss Digby often sat with her. Mrs. Primley found these little arrangements difficult to endure; her aristocratic connections were insulted if she was not considered the first lady on board, and whatever civility was offered to Mrs. Llewellyn, she chose to consider herself entitled to appropriate. On this evening she left Mr. Primley in the midst of the little Primleys to do the best he could with them, and hurried on deck to assert her rights. When she made her appearance, they were all snugly seated near the binnacle. The second mate, who was standing by the companion-ladder, offered his hand to steady her. "Thank you, Mr. Chapman; hi'm sure hi don't know what hi should do if it was not for you: the captain's time is all given to that old Welsh woman hand her daughter; hi wonder the husband submits," she said, shrugging her shoulders and laughing her nasal laugh. With one of her sweetest smiles and a little toss of the head, she said as she joined them, "Dear me, you have made yourselves comfortable." Mrs. Llewellyn partly rose to offer her seat, but Bessie, who was sitting close to

her, pulled her by the dress by way of hint not to move. The captain, on the other side of Mrs. Llewellyn, was chatting happily of his home and some past events in his life ; he looked vicious, but got up, nevertheless, and gave her his seat. Mrs. Primley took it, with great demonstration of arranging her wraps, and with many apologies. "Hi'm sure, captain, Mrs. Llewellyn would much rather have you here," with a giggle. "Gentlemen are so amusing ; hi ham so lost on board ship for want of sympathy with congenial minds, that hi must be a very dull companion"—the last words said in a stage whisper to Mrs. Llewellyn. With a full-winded sigh that seemed to come from some remote place in her interior, she added—"My mamma would be quite shocked if she could see our surroundings ;" the giggle played the gamut all down the Roman arch. Bessie Morgan and the Digbys never had patience to utter more than the coldest civilities, so that to indulge her powers of conversation Mrs. Primley was obliged to content herself with Mrs. Llewellyn and Mrs. Dduff. The other ladies she talked at, not to, whenever she could get the ear of any unwary gentleman. On this night she kept pushing herself farther and farther on the seat, and when Mr. Primley came on deck there was a little bit of room for him to sit uncomfortably beside her. He obeyed a look she gave him, and took the seat, thereby pushing little Mrs. Dduff right off the other end. Mrs. Dduff was a short woman, and gave one the idea that she was stout ; but she was simply square. She was not rounded in the slightest

degree anywhere. Her face was like the full moon, and as flat as moons are made in children's books ; notwithstanding, it was an animated face beaming with good-nature, and keeping a sharp look-out on every mortal thing, though always looking on the brightest side and hoping for the best. I think the little tip of nose must have had much to do with its animation ; for intense curiosity was depicted in every line of it. When Mr. Primley sat down, off went Mrs. Dduff at the other end of the seat, on the principle of a certain given space containing only a certain amount of bodies. Miss Digby rose too, and offered her arm to Mrs. Dduff, and the two ladies promenaded the deck.

John and Kate, who had been sitting a little apart, for John was reading aloud, looked up every now and then with an amused expression of face at the group near the binnacle. When Mrs. Dduff was ejected, so to speak, it was almost too much for their gravity ; they shut their book and turned their attention to the sea, leaning over the stern and looking down into the deep ocean. They were silent for a time, all its suggestive influences speaking to their hearts. What wonderful secrets the world of waters seems to tell of the Father's power and laws of love ; of unimagined beauty far down in the hidden places of the ocean where no human eye can intrude ! The poet's fancy may depict, but he cannot witness, the revels kept below in the caverns of the deep, where monstrous forms of life keep holiday, or chase each

other with murderous intent. The pretty zoophytes, with their long tentaculæ, may represent the flirts of the ocean-world ; for they might cause immense confusion, stretching out and feeling in all directions for something to attach to themselves, alike teasing old whales and small fry ; when tired of their sport, retiring to their shells. In that case, old Neptune would have some work in keeping order below ; and perhaps he has ; for, as I said, we know nothing about it.

CHAPTER LII.

KATE and John leant over the stern at first with a smile on their faces and a merry word or two ; but by degrees the beauty of the evening solemnized their feelings, and made them think deeply and earnestly as they touched on various subjects of conversation suggested by the book they had been reading together. They had by this time become fast friends. John, though usually a silent man about himself, had by degrees told much of his life's history to Kate. In doing so he had not dwelt on his love for Nelly ; perhaps even yet he could not speak of that dream with calmness ; but in talking of her to Kate, it was as the beloved child of his friend Llewellyn. But Kate's woman's tact had taught her to read the story aright, and she gave him all the sympathy of her warm,

generous heart. Concealment of anything from a friend was to Kate's loving nature a sort of sin against that friend. So in return she told him her own simple little story, and the reasons for her going abroad. Her father was a Baronet, a Sir Edmund Digby, the last of an old Roman Catholic family, whose ancestors, by extravagance and indolence through many preceding generations, had managed to leave Kate's father very little even to begin life with. He inherited the family disposition, and married a lady of similar tastes and habits. Poverty naturally followed, particularly as a large family of girls was added to their troubles. The elder Miss Digby, Kate's aunt, had early thrown off her allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church. Nature had given her a large, comprehensive, deeply-thinking mind, and even as a girl she resented the restrictions which the training of the Romish Church dictated. Like many minds disgusted with their early faith, she rejected all Church teaching; but who shall dare to enter into the secret places of the soul, and say such minds are not near to God? Kate had lived much with her aunt, who had paid for her education, and still had sufficient income to live in decent, quiet respectability. Sir Edmund Digby had lately died and left Lady Digby with seven daughters, and an income of not more than two hundred a-year. Kate, the eldest, as soon as she knew their position, made up her mind to face the world and go out as a governess. At this time, the elder Miss Digby had a desire to seek for a half-brother, the son of her mother by a

second marriage, who was a "ne'er-do-weel," wandering somewhere, she believed, in the wilds of Australia, and Kate instantly caught at the idea that it would be much easier to work in the new world, where all her antecedents were unknown, than in the old country ; so it came to pass the aunt and niece were on board the "Cape Hen." These facts were not told to each other all at once, but had been communicated in the confidence of friendship during many a promenade on deck, or dreamy watchings, such as they were now indulging in, as they leaned over the ship's side. Pepper was often with Kate. She was very fond of dogs and horses ; for during her father's life-time they still lived on the last part of the mortgaged estates, consisting of an old ruin of a manor-house, and large stacks of tumble-down stabling, in which were some rough ponies used by the children, and as many puppies as they chose to keep. Kate had spent the happiest hours of her home-life in the ruined stables, and in the wood joining the stable-yard ; for the gloom inside was intolerable to her. With penance and fasts and poverty and bad temper, truly the inside of her father's home was not a pleasant place. So she made friends of her dogs and her old pony, her younger sisters having been taught to look upon her as something dreadful, because, like aunt Digby, she had given herself up to Protestantism, or the devil, to them synonymous terms.

"I wonder what sort of mistress I shall find favour with," Kate said, after a silence. "Fancy me gover-

ness to Mrs. Primley, when she gets the government situation that she seems so certain of! I would do as the little boy did in Punch, have a dust-pan and shovel to sweep up her lost h's with, and keep them to supply the children's wants!"

"Kate, do you know how you pain me by thinking of such things now? Why will you not answer the question I put to you here two nights ago?"

"Because I am poor, and you pity me," she said in a low tone. Then clasping her hands together and moving a little from him, she exclaimed, "How beautiful!" as a shower of sparkling phosphorous swept over the sea.

"Do not trifle with me, Kate," he said, in a strange tone of voice; "I cannot bear it a second time. By the heavens above us, you do not know what you are doing!" His face grew very white, and he shivered like a man in an ague-fit.

Kate drew near and looked up at him; a ray of light from the binnacle shewed her the suppressed agony of that face asking her for happiness. She laid her hand on his, and a trembling word was uttered by her, sounding very much like "John."

He took the little hand in his. "Is it mine?" he said.

"Yes," she answered softly, looking down into the deep sea. A minute after, the young head was raised, and she looked into his face with her honest, truthful eyes.

While they had been standing there they had seen

the moon leave her ocean-bed, and rise in her solemn, silent beauty, transforming all their world from darkness to her own soft silvery light. There is nothing, perhaps, that speaks to the spirit so deeply as the silence of nature. Alone in the forest, how near we feel to the Great Father of all! On the ocean, when the stars look down in their still majesty, the soul knows it is a part of the all-pervading immortality, that it is kindred with the Spirit that animates all nature. Our own world, too, is shining a bright silent star to other sentient beings, the hubbub of its discordant scenes hushed into silence by immeasurable distance, and forming part of the great procession that heralds forth the mighty Maker's power. The voices of the night had blessed their vows, and they still stood leaning over the ship's side and drinking in the happy thought, that whatever life had in store for them, they would share it together.

CHAPTER LIII.

"DEAR me, how you do fidget, Mr. Primley!" said that gentleman's better-half to him; "hi have had no peace since you came!"

"Well, my dear, you asked me to sit here," he meekly suggested. "I am sure I have not had much comfort on this hard corner."

The lady looked indignant, and glanced up at the

moon for sympathy as she answered, "It's just like you, always thinking of your own comfort ; the other ladies can have seats prepared for them, but hî'm obliged to put hup with hanything. What amusement they can find, too, passes my understanding, sitting here watching that 'orrid man at the wheel ; and now they are off listening to those vulgar creatures on the lower deck, singing, as they call it. Singing, indeed !"

"But, my dear, there are some fine voices among them," the poor man ventured to say.

"Mr. Primley ! and you profess to be a musical man—as if such people could sing !"

He did not attempt to keep up the conversation. Life on board ship had quite subdued him. He had the care of all the children, and could not get his gin on the sly as he did on shore, so he had no spirits left in him.

"It's no use," she continued, "my expecting sympathy from you, though hi ham daily shocked at the surrounding scenes. Thank God ! my daughters are not old enough to be corrupted."

"Why, my dear, what is there wrong now?" he said.

"Wrong !" she replied, snappishly ; "look there at that bold girl, she's holding his hand. I've passed by them two or three times quite close, hand they mind me no more than if hi was their little beast of a dog."

The man at the wheel, as he shifted his hands, glanced for a moment at John and Kate. A smile

flitted over his face. The next minute it was as stolid as ever when the mate walked up and looked at the binnacle light. "Luff, luff, keep her steady." "Aye, aye, sir;" and the mate turned round and spoke to John.

"Miss Digby asked me to tell the young lady," he said, "she thought it was time to go down. But don't let me hurry you," he added, as though he did not wish to annoy them.

"Thank you," John said. "We had no idea it was so late. Your cloak is on the bench, is it not?" addressing Kate.

"Yes," she answered, laughing; "close to Mrs. Primley. I'll get it."

He held her hand to steady her, for the waves were rising and made the ship roll a great deal.

"Good-night, Mrs. Primley," she said, taking up her cloak.

"Good-night, Miss Kate Digby," with a giggle and sniff; "hi should think you enjoyed the moonlight."

"Thank you, we have very much," she answered, as she walked off, leaning on John's arm.

The man at the wheel smiled again. When his hour was up, he told a chum of his the long-nosed old woman had got her match in that bright-eyed little girl.

Mrs. Primley looked after Kate's retreating figure, and echoed the words, "We enjoyed the moonlight! Did you ever hear anything to equal that, Mr. Primley?"

"Why, my dear," he said, "you see we were young ourselves once."

"Don't compare me to such people, Mr. Primley!" she said, rising to go below just on the crest of a wave, which wave pitched her with one clean slide into the lee-scuppers.

"I am sure, my dear," he began to say, as she was sliding away. He only got a scornful look for answer; for he could not help her, as he had himself to hold on to the skylight. And while doing so added, in a low voice, "I did not say you were like Miss Kate; I never thought so." But his words might as well have been said to the waves; for she had taken the second mate's arm, who steadied her down; and she relieved herself by telling him how much she suffered from the vulgar (her favourite word) associates she was obliged to put up with for the present.

The lamps would never burn well on board the "Cape Hen," and Kate protested against the disagreeables of the saloon. Having to sit with Mrs. Primley and hear her lecture her husband on good-breeding, was more than her patience could bear.

"I shall go to bed," she said, as that lady walked in, making most demonstrative thanks to Mr. Chapman for his escort.

"So early, Kitty! Well, do as you like," Miss Digby said.

Kate leaned over and shook hands with Mrs. Morgan and Mrs. Llewellyn. The old lady was very fond of her, and had known for some little time of John's

affection for her ; and when she saw them together on this evening, she hoped he would win a favourable answer from Kate. As the young girl leaned forward to say good-night, she held her hand for a moment and looked in her face. "Make him happy," she whispered. A bright blush answered her. Kate bent down to her aunt. "Come in to me soon," she said ; and then she had to take the cloak and wraps from John's arm, who was leaning against the door with rather a saucy expression of face, smiling as he watched the good-nights : his turn would come ; but as she took the things she said no word that Mrs. Primley could hear, though she was listening with great perseverance. She only took the wraps very demurely from John's arm, and passed very close to him, it must be confessed, as she went into her cabin ; but that might have been another wave's doing.

John looked at the door very much as a miser may be supposed to look at a casket that contains for him some priceless treasure, and then sat down by the side of Mrs. Llewellyn, and took her hand in his. Miss Digby looked up from her game of cribbage with Mrs. Dduff, and nodded to him. Bessie sat down on the other side of him, but they spoke on ordinary subjects ; for Mrs. Primley was pretending to work on the other side of the table, and on account of the dim lamp leaned over so much that no word of their conversation could be lost to her.

"The night is so lovely, John," Mrs. Llewellyn said, for she saw he was longing to have a talk with her,

"I think I should like a short walk on deck before going to bed."

"That is like my kind mother," he said, pressing her hand.

The old lady was soon wrapped up, and, leaning on John's arm, surprised the captain very much by appearing again on the quarter-deck for a walk. She was soon followed by Bessie and Miss Digby, when the game of cribbage was over. Mrs. Dduff remained below winking and nodding, and rubbing the tip that represented her nose up and down and round and across with a dirty pocket-handkerchief squeezed into a small bundle to hide its much service; but unconscious in her delighted sympathy of doing anything of the kind. She beamed upon Mrs. Primley—her mission was evidently to keep that lady below.

"What a beautiful piece of embroidery!" the old hypocrite said. "You must find it difficult to work it by this light."

Mrs. Primley giggled and sighed deeply. "Do you think so?" with her head on one side, looking at the effect of her work. "My mamma never allowed hus to do servants' work, as she called it,—mending stockings hand that kind of thing."

"Ah, those must have been pleasant times for you!" Mrs. Dduff said, with a wicked little wink.

Mrs. Primley smoothed out her work, and looked immensely confidential when she spoke again. "The sacrifices hi ham making by coming here no one can

believe, but those who know how hi've been brought hup," she said, with another very prolonged sigh.

Mrs. Dduff's answer was a smile, and she drummed upon the table with one hand and rubbed her tip with the other; her restless curiosity had long before ferretted out all about the Primleys. Dr. Dduff had taken pity on Mr. Primley, and given him many glasses of his favourite drink, gin and water, in the privacy of his (the Dr.'s) cabin; and Mr. Primley had found it pleasant to talk over all his hopes and prospects in the new country to which they were going. He also prosed over his past sufferings, and found a ready listener in the doctor. By these means the doctor found out that Mr. Primley had been a teacher of music, and he judged not a very successful one; and Mrs. Primley had been a sort of help to the lady's-maid, and dressmaker and useful woman in a nobleman's family. When Mr. Primley had had an extra glass, he boasted much of his wife's devotion to Lady Darewell; often telling an anecdote of her Ladyship's wit, who used to say, "Now the children are growing up, I must have all Primley's strayed h's collected, and send them over for colonial use." "Between ourselves," he would say, when he got quite facetious, "it is very funny how the London people mispronounce their own language."

Mr. Primley came from a country town, and when he had taken sufficient stimulus he became valiant enough to laugh a little at his wife behind her back;

and thus he upset all Mrs. Primley's grand notions, expressed in her pet sentence, "If you affect position it will be granted to you." She liked him to gratify his spirit-imbibing propensities at some one else's expense ; but she little knew how he unburdened his heart at the same time.

These few little facts recurred to Mrs. Dduff's memory ; so she drummed on the table and rubbed her tip straight up, her habit when she was much amused : no wonder it was celestial in its tendencies.

"You are very intimate with Mrs. Llewellyn and her set," Mrs. Primley said, putting her lips together and bridling up. "Hi suppose you know their family connections. They never speak of them. Hi overheard Miss Digby hand that niece of hers talking about some poor relation they are going to look after. Miss Digby said very likely they should find him a shepherd. Just fancy people like that being saloon passengers, and setting hup for ladies ! Indeed, when hi heard that, hi determined to cut them as soon as we land ; for hi 'ave letters of introduction from Lady Darewell, hand no doubt Primley will 'ave a very good appointment. Hi tell you in great confidence, because hi wish to warn you ; hand hi've such han hinterest in you hand the dear doctor—hi always say professional people must be genteel."

Mrs. Dduff drummed away on the table, not having anything else to do with her hands ; and the flat, round face beamed upon Mrs. Primley, scintillating all over with fun. That lady continued to talk, en-

couraged to proceed by the nods and smiles of her interested listener. They chatted on, if chatting it might be called, when one did all the talking and the other the listening, until the party on deck came down. Mrs. Llewellyn went directly to rest, and Mrs. Morgan went into her cabin with her; she usually spent the hour before retiring for the night in her mother's cabin. There was a tear on her long eyelashes and a smile on her lip as she bade John good-night. Miss Digby's kind smile to John affronted Mrs. Primley very much. "The old woman was as bad as the young one," she muttered to herself; for she had no one to talk to now, as Mrs. Dduff went over to the enemy when they came below. By degrees all the others dropped off, and John was left lying on one of the sofas with a dim, swinging lamp. He could not see to read, if he had been ever so much inclined; but he was not, memory was too busy. He thought the love he still felt for Nelly was as warm and true as it had ever been, but he knew it was changed. Nelly's love was the first long-cherished dream of his boyhood and early manhood; he could not share that love with any mortal being. Nelly married Vivian Vaughan.

The struggle was a dreadful one for John; but he cut the weak spots from his heart, cicatrized the old wounds, and went forth a new man; quivering still, but strengthening day by day for life's work. All the love he might not feel for Nelly seemed to find refuge in Mr. and Mrs. Llewellyn. For her father's sake he could go forth and seek her, as he would have done

for a sister, and he felt he could live with her day by day and minister to her wants; but he could not marry her now. That hope had been a beautiful dream, but it was gone for ever. John knew he was an immortal being, with a glorious future before him; and he dared not waste in useless regrets a life that had been given for far higher uses. Nelly, too, he knew would have it so; she had chosen another path through life than the one he trod; but they would meet at the end with the pure love of childhood blessing them again, and so enter that world where angels dwell.

John lay on the sofa for hours, thinking of many things,—the past, the present and the future. How different life had become for him from what he expected! But he accepted the position in which Providence had placed him with joy and hope and trust, and a firm determination to do the right as far as he could to all connected with him. He thought of Mrs. Illewellyn with peculiar sadness and affection; for he had always felt for her such love as a true-hearted man feels for his mother. When a motherless boy, she had taken him into her warm, loving heart as one of her own children, and the feeling had strengthened with his strength. As he lay there, it would be hard to say if sadness or joy were uppermost. He was deeply thankful for the love he had won, and when he thought of the frank, loving, truthful girl, resting so near him, his own life's treasure, joy seemed to fill every avenue of thought; but he did not forget his

friend or his friend's child. While Nelly's fate remained so dark he could not fully enjoy his own happiness.

CHAPTER LIV.

"COME up on deck, Kate, and you will see land," John said one morning as she was sitting reading aloud to Mrs. Llewellyn in the saloon. Mrs. Llewellyn was lying on the sofa, for there was a good deal of sea on, and Bessie Morgan and Kate Digby were sitting at her feet on the step. It was a month or five weeks since that moonlight night in the tropics, when we left John lying on that same sofa thinking of many things. John and Kate were quite at their ease now. It was arranged that their marriage should take place as soon after they landed in Melbourne as was convenient, and after that event they intended travelling among the colonies to see if there was any place they would like better than another for a permanent home. They were to leave Miss Digby with Mr. and Mrs. Morgan and Mrs. Llewellyn while they were away, and return to her after their tour. They thought that by doing so they would have an opportunity of seeking Nelly in many places, as well as selecting a spot of their own choosing for their home. Kate put down her book, and Bessie her work, and got on deck as best they could, for the "Cape Hen" was pitching into the

seas she met with great vigour. Kate found some ropes looped near one of the ladders, and making a foothold of that, rested against the ship's side, and looked at the far-off little bit of dark land. Bessie Morgan held on to John. They were soon joined by Miss Digby and Mrs. Dduff.

"Bless me," said the last-mentioned lady, "the captain tells me that is Cape Otway, and a very uncomfortable place it looks even for sea-gulls."

"We shall be inside the heads this evening, if we have this wind a few hours longer, Mr. Watson told me," John said, quite radiant with his near prospect of landing in Melbourne.

Kate was as much pleased, but she did not choose to say so. She wrapped herself in her warm cloak and leaned against the ropes, and watched in silence their approach to the yet distant land. There was something fascinating, too, in watching the monster waves as they chased each other, racing on as they do for ever, each one enough to engulf that little world of life of which she was a fraction; and yet the good ship braved them all, rising to her work like a sea-bird, and with never-tiring good-humour gliding over the rough places as easily as the smooth ones.

"Well," said Mrs. Dduff, rubbing the tip of her nose straight up—"Well, I don't think much of it so far. I shall go below again, for it is very cold, and when there is something more to see, let us know."

Miss Digby and Mrs. Morgan followed, and the lovers were left to themselves, though not to enjoy

much peace, for all was bustle and excitement. They did not go below; they wanted to see as much as they could of the new country to which they had come. At dinner-time they went down for something to eat, where Mrs. Primley was launching out in grand style, on the strength of the government situation Primley would have; so she was very cool to the plebeians around her, and perfectly scandalized at Kate and John, who, quite unconscious of committing any impropriety, went on deck together again as soon as they had finished their dinner.

Just before sundown, John called through the skylight, "We are nearing the heads; would you like to come up, Mrs. Llewellyn?" She thought she would; so he went down and helped her up, making a seat for her with some railway rugs and a small sail.

"Is it possible we are going through there?" Kate said.

John looked up from his occupation about Mrs. Llewellyn at the long line of low-land, and saw a comparatively narrow opening between two headlands, where the mass of breakers gave one the idea that the water must be very shallow.

The captain's eager face, the helmsman's careful look, all make one feel how much depends on the nautical knowledge of those who have the command. Now the good ship is in the rough water, tossing every way; five minutes more, and she is through the heads and gliding on in comparatively smooth water.

"That was well done," said Mrs. Dduff, rubbing up

her little nose until it glowed like a red-hot nob in the moony face. "Sailors are clever fellows in their own way, though they are rather stuck-up on board their own ships."

The "Cape Hen" anchored some distance down the waters, as it was too late to get quite up to Melbourne that night, the distance being about forty miles from the heads to the city. So there was nothing for it but to go to their berths for one night more, and be prepared to land early in the morning.

The landing to our ladies was not much trouble, for John and Mr. Morgan were good managers. But Kate and Bessie felt disappointed when they landed on a quay very much like any part of the docks at home; and then they got into a railway carriage, and were whirled up to Melbourne, just as if they were going from London Bridge to Greenwich. The fine hotel, too, with everything you could want at command, seemed quite a take-in, when they had made up their minds to do a little in the savage line, —sleeping under a gum tree, for instance; and then they would inevitably have got the rheumatism as the reward of their exploit. But this landing was so different from what Kate had anticipated when she left home, that she did not seem able to realize it. To land with the feeling that she must soon leave her aunt, and enter into the service of people very much her inferiors in every way, had been what she had to look forward to when John first met her on board the "Cape Hen." Now she had landed, it was with the

hope that in a few more hours she would be the happy bride of the man she loved ; yet Kate was not in a merry humour, but quiet and calm. She had not one foreboding thought of the future—all was hope and perfect trust in him she had chosen.

CHAPTER LV.

THE wedding was over. It had been a very quiet one ; so quiet that the people of the hotel where they were staying knew nothing about it. The bride and bridegroom drove from the church to lodgings they had taken in Collins Street, and the rest of our friends spent the remainder of the day in transferring themselves from the hotel to a furnished house they had had the good luck to find wanting a tenant near the Botanical Gardens. Here they soon settled down to watch and wait. They thought it best to leave their cards at Government House, as they did not wish any section of society to remain unexplored ; and Miss Digby had letters of introduction that would make her welcome as soon as it was known she was there.

Mrs. Llewellyn did not care to seek the society of strangers, so Miss Digby and Bessie walked to Government House one morning soon after their landing. On their return from a pleasant interview with the Governor and his lady, they met Mrs. Primley in a hired carriage, which swept past them ; the lady look-

ing pointedly out at a rose-bush, and talking very loud to Primley to prevent his having a chance of noticing those low people "walking to Government House—just fancy!" she said. The giggle echoed through the Roman nose quite triumphantly in appreciation of her greater knowledge of the proprieties of life. "Hi told Mrs. Dduff when she talked of walking, how foolish it was; a little dash makes a good impression, hand hi'm sure hour brougham looks quite 'andsome." Her speech was cut short by the carriage stopping at the entrance-door. Without any nervous flutter that perhaps in this novel situation she might make a blunder, she descended from her carriage with a great many little airs and graces; the effect of which was lost on all but the men in waiting; for Mrs. Primley found the lady of the mansion "not at home;" so Mr. Primley, secretly pleased that the visit had so ended, handed her back to her carriage.

A few days after this, Mr. and Mrs. Davies started for Sydney. They walked over to Mr. Morgan's the evening before going to take their leave. There had been an immigrant ship in, and Mr. Morgan had been down to her in the morning; and he was glad to see John and have a talk with him. It was arranged between them that he was to go on board every such ship that came to Melbourne, and John would do the same wherever he went, as well as make inquiries about recent immigrants on shore; and by these means they still kept hope alive.

Miss Digby, who looked upon John as a son, now

told him she had advertised for her "ne'er-do-weel" of a brother in all the papers that such a man would be likely to read. "And so you see," she said, looking up at him from over her spectacles, "we must wait and hope. My Kitty looks happy enough," she added, with a kind smile lighting up her intelligent face.

Kate smiled and blushed, and changed the subject from herself to Melbourne. The size and number of the good houses, the streets and shops, the public buildings and library, all seemed to amaze her; and the Botanical Gardens charmed her. She thought them so beautiful; and so they were, for trees of almost every variety will grow in the climate, those of Europe equally with those of the tropics; and the Yarra Yarra river adds greatly to the beauty of the situation. John and she were never tired of wandering about in the gardens, wondering at the abundant growth of vegetable life. The part of England where Kate's life had passed was bleak and barren at the best; and when the woods were cut to put money into the pockets of the landlords, and neglect was added to that, it turned what might have been a thriving spot into a waste moorland. So no wonder she was charmed with the overflow of life that is seen in the cultivated gardens in Victoria.

John seemed to be as much pleased with everything as his wife was. His new life had opened to him in this new country with so much happiness; love had come to him in its sweetest form, a true-hearted, beautiful young wife. He was independent of the anxie-

ties of business, and his deep sorrow for Nelly's loss was softened to him much more than he was even aware by the companionship of his Kate—Kate who sympathized with him in everything, even in his anxiety for his lost friend Llewellyn's child.

CHAPTER LVI.

MR. MORGAN's small property was carefully invested, and gave him a much better income than it had done in Wales. He also occupied his spare time in literary pursuits, which paid him very well. Miss Digby, too, contributed her portion to the housekeeping; and Bessie was quite busy with all she had to superintend. A good-sized house and one servant still left Mrs. Morgan plenty to do; for though Bridget was a capital servant, she did not understand the ways of the new country, and could not adapt herself to changes as easily as her mistress. The wood was a sad trial to Bridget. The logs were generally a little bit too long for the fire-place, and often wanted a good deal of coaxing to make them burn brightly. Then at first the sharp wood-sellers beguiled her into buying damp wood, and the consequences kept her "in an everlasting state of cuss," as an American neighbour said; and such daily troubles went far in counteracting the admiration she felt for many other things. It became quite a little bit of fun between Bessie Morgan and

Miss Digby, who used to say to each other, "It will be best not to go near Bridget this morning till the kitchen fire burns brightly."

One morning, about three months after they were settled in their home, a man came to the back door, dressed in a pair of very dirty canvas trousers, fastened round his waist with a piece of string for a belt, having on an old red flannel shirt and a cabbage-tree hat, with a piece of string by no means ornamental tied round that. There were not wanting tokens of his addiction to tobacco and ardent spirits. He had a down, hungry-dog look about him, as though he had to scour the country and pick up the bones. There was something in his tone of voice that made you think he might perhaps have been once the companion of gentlemen, and if so he would be a most hopeless relation to find in any land. As he stood now at the open kitchen door, a violent fit of coughing, accompanied by spitting of blood, prevented his speaking for some time. Bridget was not in a very good humour, and as she saw her spotlessly white stones soiled, she turned sharply round on the stranger, and thinking he wanted to sell a load of wood, said, "I don't want any wood."

"I did not say you did," said the man, now able to speak. "Does Miss Digby live here?"

"Yes, she does!" Bridget answered. "What do you want with Miss Digby? She isn't accustomed to talk to the likes of you."

He had walked into the kitchen, and sat down,

resting his elbows on his knees, his hands hanging before him. As Bridget spoke, he looked from under the rim of his broken cabbage-tree hat with a queer expression of face, and said, "You go and tell Miss Digby Mr. Charles Forrest is here."

Bridget's eyes, and mouth too, opened with wonder. She knew Miss Digby had advertised for a scamp of a brother, but she had always thought of him as a gentleman. In the first moment of surprise she was very much inclined to pooh-pooh the idea altogether and turn him out of the kitchen; and she looked sharply round to see if any plate was lying about. He understood the action, and smiled. "You may leave me safely," he said; "I shall not steal your spoons." She was so taken aback by having her thoughts thus plainly put before her, that she rushed out of the kitchen into the sitting-room, where the three ladies were, with her news. Miss Digby looked up as Bridget entered the room, but the moment she uttered the name, "Charles Forrest," she sprang from her chair, and went into the kitchen. Mrs. Morgan kept Bridget with her, and found her some work to do up-stairs.

In about half an hour Miss Digby returned to the sitting-room, pale and agitated. She sat down in a chair, and for a few minutes hid her face in her handkerchief and wept silently. Bessie sat beside her and took her hand, but they said no words to each other. In a short time Miss Digby gained command over herself; her energetic, active mind was seldom

unnerved for any length of time. But she could remember him a handsome, merry, spoiled boy ; the carefully-nurtured pet (as far as animal wants were concerned) of a weak, indulgent, superstitious mother. "He is in a shocking state," Miss Digby said, looking up at Mrs. Morgan.

"Let me go and bring him in here," Bessie suggested.

"No, not now," Miss Digby answered. "He must go with me and get some decent clothes before I let him see even you ; but it is not that that distresses me so much,—that is easily remedied. I fear he is a drunkard ; for he is not quite sober now, and he asked me for some brandy, and said he could not live without it,—that he was dying, spitting his lungs up, so he said."

"I will go and prepare a room for him, and have it ready by the time you come back," Bessie said quickly, looking kindly into her friend's face.

"No, no !" said Miss Digby, resolutely. "I have sent him for a car, and I shall have time before he comes back to go down the road to the cottage that has lodgings to let. The washerwoman told me they were respectable people. I have asked all about them, for I anticipated something of this ; and I am not going to bring such a nuisance into your home, my dear," she said, putting up both hands to prevent Bessie's expostulation. "It is bad enough for me, but it is my duty ; and I will go through with it without repining. You and dear Mrs. Llewellyn will be a great comfort, being so near to me, and may come and see

me as often as you like,—the oftener the better ; but now I must go.” And she went out of the room to prepare for her work.

The distance to the cottage she had spoken of was not more than five minutes' walk from Mrs. Morgan's house ; and she soon came back, pleased with having made satisfactory arrangements with the landlady. At the moment she came back, the car drove up which Mr. Charles Forrest had been to fetch ; and that interesting specimen of manhood looked out, but did not get out ; for which piece of rudeness his sister was truly thankful, for she felt humiliated at the thought that any one should see him in his dirty state. She said hurriedly to Bessie, as she was about to go, “ When I have bought him some clothes, I shall take him to the lodgings, and then come here and arrange my things ; so I shall see you again this afternoon.” She left the room, and Mrs. Llewellyn and Bessie looked after her with sympathizing admiration for the unselfish goodness of her heart.

CHAPTER LVII.

It was quite late in the evening before Miss Digby returned, and she found Mr. Morgan, his wife and Mrs. Llewellyn enjoying an early moon-rise, just before the day had quite faded. They were sitting in the veranda, charmed with the balmy climate. It was

the month of September, and after a wet winter the first warm sunny days were delicious ; for the flowers blooming in the winter time in the Australias are in their full flush of glory about that time. The veranda was covered with dhollicus and passion flowers, both red and white ; and in corners sheltered from the sun the violets had grown into a perfect mass of bloom, and more than rivalled the English flower in perfume. The roses, too, were wonderful in their abundance. "No one would believe it," Bessie said, "but those who had seen it."

There was something in Miss Digby's expressive, animated face as she joined them that made Bessie exclaim, "You have something to tell us !"

"I have, indeed," Miss Digby said ; "so much, I hardly know where to begin."

Mrs. Llewellyn took her hand, trembling very much, and looked into her face. Miss Digby answered that look. "I have not found out where she is yet—poor child ! but I have very much important information for us all." She seated herself in a chair by Mrs. Llewellyn's side, and Bessie and Mr. Morgan drew close and listened. "You know my brother Charles was brought up to be a minister of the Church of England," Miss Digby began. "It was he who married Nelly to Captain Vaughan."

A cry broke from Mrs. Llewellyn's parted lips—a low, sharp cry. Miss Digby still held one trembling hand ; Bessie moved quietly to her mother's side, and kneeling there, with her face buried on her shoulder,

breathed out her prayer of thankfulness. The most bitter part of their sorrow was taken from them. Dishonour to those proud, pure hearts was worse than death. The moonlight danced among the leaves and flowers; the violets sent out their fresh perfume, as a light breeze stirred them, like a rush of angels' wings passing by and pausing in sympathy over the sufferers.

After a few minutes' pause, Mr. Morgan said, "How did Mr. Charles Forrest know you were connected with us?"

Miss Digby answered—"I told him I was living with some very dear friends, and mentioned your name and Mrs. Llewellyn's, adding, you, like myself, had come to seek a wanderer. When I said that, he raised his haggard face, and looked into mine with—oh! such a look; then answered, 'I once helped another to do a great wrong to a girl of that name, and I received money for the deed—money that has burnt into my soul ever since. Many a night as I lay under a gum tree thinking of it, I would have given all that remained of life to undo that deed. But if I live long enough and can travel so far, I can make restitution.' What was it you did, Charles? I said. He answered me, 'Married a beautiful little girl of the name of Nelly Llewellyn to Vivian Vaughan, my old college friend.' I was going to speak, but he stopped me with the words, 'Hear me to the end.' He then went on speaking very rapidly, saying, 'Captain Vaughan came to me when I was hiding from my creditors at Bboddley, and arranged for his marriage; but said it must

be kept secret. I was to get two witnesses to the marriage—strangers, if possible. It so happened there were two packmen at the inn in the village; two fellows with easy consciences, who asked no questions, except what they were to get, and the Captain was very liberal just then. But now comes the worst part of my story. Vivian said I must fasten a loose sheet in the church register, that he might take it away with him unknown to his wife. The certificate which I gave to her, he also said he would take care of. When I saw that sweet young face smile on him as he folded it and put it in his pocket, I felt as though we were two devils. But though I was mean enough to take his money, I did not do quite as he wished, for the loose sheet of paper I inserted was a kind of paper used for copying by some business people; what you write on one side leaves its counterpart on the paper underneath. I got the thickest of the kind I could, that he might not discover the trick I had played him. There was another chance that helped me also. He was obliged to let me take the loose leaf out of the book and slip it into his hand as he left the church, for he was afraid she would see if he took out the sheet himself; so he went away quite unconscious that he left the register of his marriage plainly written in the old church book. At first I rejoiced, thinking I could always extract money from him; but now I know I am dying, I would give a great deal to be able to travel home and see that poor girl righted.' Such was his confession," Miss Digby said.

"When I told him Nelly Llewellyn's family were here—were my dear friends—he was overjoyed. He says he will repeat all he has said to a lawyer, if you like to take one to him ; for I am sorry to say," she added, "his days are numbered. I found he was very ill, and before we returned to the lodgings I took him to a doctor. There has been disease of the lungs going on for months, and travelling down to this place he has caught cold upon cold. The doctor does not think he will last many weeks."

How eagerly and thankfully they listened as Miss Digby told her story ! the poor mother murmuring now and then, "My poor darling !—my poor child !"

Mr. Morgan said, "I will call on Mr. Forrest to-morrow morning with a professional friend, and take his declaration on oath ; and we shall be in time to write to Lady Vaughan by this mail. I am determined she shall be made to acknowledge Nelly's position as her son's wife."

"Don't you think," Bessie suggested, "now we are sure of the marriage, we might advertise in the American papers in such a way as to let her understand, if she reads them, that she is acknowledged ?"

"But why only in the American papers—why not here also ?" said he.

"Because I thought she might possibly not have left America," Bessie answered.

CHAPTER LVIII.

WE are told by the learned in such matters, that seven years suffice to change every part of the human body, the soul's covering. I like the idea, especially for those who are striving to rise out of their past follies and sins, and are cultivating their higher nature, tending upwards to the pure spirit of truth and love. The thought might check the pride of many a vain beauty, as well as encourage the penitent sinner to remember how the present is fading and wearing, and that it depends on ourselves very much what sort of persons we shall be and seem hereafter.

I shall take up my story again seven years after we left Mr. and Mrs. Morgan and their mother sitting under the veranda at the house in Melbourne, talking over the best way of letting Lady Vaughan know what Miss Digby's brother had told them. The letter had been sent, and an answer returned to it by Lady Vaughan, written in a very different spirit from what they expected. Not that the lady was heart-broken or humbled—no; she would go down to the grave the same cold, selfish, haughty woman she had lived. But her last son, Sir Harry, was dying of cancer; if there was no male heir among her children the estates would go to a distant relative. Hence the change in her. She hoped there might be a child of that ill-fated marriage found yet. Her solicitor was to use every endeavour to trace Nelly in Canada; and she left it

to Mr. Morgan to do his best in the Australias. John Davies had of course resigned all active part to Mr. Morgan, as her nearest relative ; but seven years had come and gone, and unbroken silence still covered Nelly's sorrows.

John had settled in South Australia, within forty miles of Adelaide ; and Mr. and Mrs. Morgan had given up their house in Melbourne, and come to live near him, at a small township about six miles from John's place. Mr. Morgan came because John and some other friends had obtained for him an appointment to the church there ; so Bessie was once more in her element, with her schools and her visits, and all those acts of kindness by which a minister's good wife can increase the happiness of those around her.

John bought a place that had been very carefully planted before he came into possession, belonging to one of those early settlers who worked hard to make a beautiful estate ; and when their work was done, got tired of the place, and went back to the old country. The house that was on the property when first John came he did not like ; so he pulled it down and built for himself. But the gardens were in fine growth rather than order, and left him abundance to superintend and arrange. He had a deep creek running through his land, and his vineyards and orangery were the pride of the neighbourhood. It was situated in some hilly ranges, and the house was built sufficiently high to get a beautiful distant sea view through an opening in the hills. The only drawback was the

steep drive from the lodge-gate to the house. Timid friends wondered how Mrs. Davies could live there ; but Kate said "they could not expect to get all the beauty of mountain scenery and the safety of a dead level ; besides, they got with the sea view the afternoon sea breeze, and on hot summer days that was most delicious ; being so high, too, they escaped the gully breezes, of all tiresome things the most tiresome."

Kate and her husband did not expect perfection anywhere, and they had found so much happiness in the new country, that they loved it truly, and intended making it their home. It opened a fine prospect for their children, and there were many little feet now pattering about. John's property in the old country had increased in value, but it was not improved as a residence ; for the mineral wealth near his old home in Wales had brought smelting works too near "The Gables" to make it as pleasant as it used to be ; so that one tie that might have drawn him back to the old world was broken.

The life suited Kate exactly. She was free as the wild birds of the forest, and she was in a position to select her own friends, and often had them staying in the house with her ; and as both she and John were too independent to tie themselves to any set, they drew to their home a clever, good and intellectual circle of friends, such as could not be easily matched anywhere, except in the large cities of the world.

John had a fine library and good shooting. In one

of his gullies he had a fast-increasing rabbit warren, and it did not require a long ride from his place to get among the kangaroos ; so no wonder it was thought pleasant to be invited to "Yarrapinga," the name of John's property.

Miss Digby was rather alarming to some of the ladies, she was considered so very blue ; but as she had her own two rooms, and kept her studious habits confined to her own retirement, it generally happened that those who came with some fear, after they had made her acquaintance, went away with much love for her. And then the mistress of the house was such a frank, affectionate, truthful, earnestly good woman, —thoughtful for others, so sure of God's love protecting all,—that it seemed to sun each object she came in contact with. Thus Kate, hopeful Kate,—who when a girl had, so to speak, plunged into the world to seek her fortunes,—cheered many a sinking heart that had done the like, but whose reward was more slowly attained.

CHAPTER LIX.

ONE fine September morning, Kate and John stood at the open front door. It commanded a view down the gully, and through an opening in the distant hills the blue sea was seen sparkling in the early light. It was a spot that a native of Switzerland might revel

in, rejoicing to find such an oasis in the desert-land of much-abused Australia. From the point where they stood they could see far down the valley, with the rounded bold hills cultivated on either side, in many places nearly to the top. Hill rose upon hill, with ravines intersecting them and stretching out in all directions. Here and there, a hill of dark rocks would thrust itself forward, and defy all the gentle promises of cultivation, a *black fellow* of the inorganic world. Side by side, in loving fellowship, the next headland would rear its crest, covered to the top with native trees. The morning and evening light has a power of transforming the young gum trees into a beautiful object in the landscape; the foliage is so light and feathery, from the leaves taking the light on the edge, instead of the broad surface, of the leaf, and consequently at noon-day giving less shadow than other trees; but on this morning the whole gully glittered like a fairy scene. Among the gums were clumps of wattles covered with their lovely yellow flowers, and scenting the air for miles around. Lower down, along the winding of the creek, the vegetable gardens were fresh and green; and here and there, at long intervals, a cottage might be seen, surrounded by its vineyards and flower garden.

John and Kate looked silently on all this beauty for a few minutes. "What a lovely morning!" Kate softly said; and then young voices were heard coming up the garden paths on the hill-side, and a cheerful-looking Irish nurse headed a happy group, the eldest

boy carrying in his hand a bough of wattle as big as himself, covered with flowers. It was some of the first wattle-flowers of the season; so Arthur thought he had found a prize.

"I shall be off," said John, "now this mob of young savages have beset me!" taking his baby in his arms notwithstanding, with a look of intense admiration.

"Then you intend going to Adelaide to-day?" Kate said.

"Yes; but I shall be back by noon to-morrow, if your list of wants does not detain me too long."

"Just listen to what papa says, baby," she answered; brushing with her hand the curls from its forehead. "We must not send for any shoes or petticoats, 'nor nofink,' as brother Arthur says."

She went into the house to write her list; for if John had not her orders in black and white, she declared he forgot everything. He and the children went to the stables to see the horses and order the trap for papa.

They soon assembled again in the veranda to see John off. Kate, taking the baby from her husband, said, "Is the roan fit to ride? I want to pay a visit to Mrs. Julian Smith. I have not been there since the last baby was born, and that must be quite six months ago."

"Yes, you can ride the roan," John said; "but you had better take some one with you; it is five or six miles from here, and the road is very bad."

"I don't mind the road, and I know the way. I

can leave baby quite well now with nurse ; and therefore, as you will not be at home, I shall not attempt to return to-night," she said.

"Well, if you wish to go, do so ; but do not get into danger, Kitty."

She looked up smilingly at the careful look of love that had stolen over his face ; and, tossing baby up and down, said, as he drove off, "Never fear for me ; I shall be all right."

John felt many times, as he rode into town that day, sorry he had not asked Kate to remain at home. He could give no good reason to himself for his fears ; but he had an uneasy sense of something coming. It was not so much that he thought of danger to his wife. She was a very good as well as careful horse-woman, and had often taken long rides by herself before, and knew the road she was going quite well ; but his mind was restless, and flitted over many sad events of his past life. He thought of poor Llewellyn, the dearest friend his heart had ever prized. The Curate had been as a father and brother and friend for many years of the lonely lad's life ; from his orphan babyhood till manhood's mature years, the Curate and his family had been his all. Then he thought of Nelly in her young beauty, and dreamed on for a time until the reins hung so loose that the horse tripped slightly. The jerk recalled him to the present, and with a smart lash of the whip he reminded the animal of its duty. "Poor Nelly !" he murmured, when they were going more smoothly. Then he thought of Kate, and smiled ;

for he knew she might read every thought of his heart and find no disloyalty there, though in Kate's quick, impetuous nature there certainly was a dash of jealousy. She must be the first in the heart she had chosen, and John understood and loved her with an appreciative love that would have made her heart beat with delight could such feelings be put into words. But, like our thoughts of heaven, the highest earthly good is unspoken; we have not learned the soul's purest language yet.

CHAPTER LX.

KATE's trim, pretty figure looked remarkably well in her dark cloth habit, that fitted her as a habit ought to fit. The neat little hat became her, too. It was very slightly trimmed, and her whole dress was without any of those startling pieces of ribbon with which pretty country girls sometimes contrive to disfigure themselves. Kate dressed well. From self-respect she would have put her things on as becomingly as she could if she had lived in a desert.

The two elder children, Arthur and Cora, had followed her into her bedroom, and watched each arrangement of her toilet with admiring eyes. "Now mamma's finished," said Cora; and she smoothed down the glossy cloth of the habit with the same sort of loving touch that she often bestowed on pussy.

"Here's your whip, mamma," Arthur said. He had been holding it ready all the dressing, and making a slight nuisance of himself with it.

"That's right, my boy—thank you!" Kate said, taking the whip from him.

She ran down stairs, and, mounting the roan, was soon on her way, followed to the gate by the nurse and children, who watched her as long as they could see her between the trees.

John's fears were groundless, as far as Kate was concerned. She had a beautiful ride and a kind welcome at her friend's. The day passed most pleasantly; there are always so many improvements to see in a growing place in six months. Towards the end of the afternoon they were sitting at an open window, talking, as mothers do, of their children. Some of the little Smiths were playing in the garden near the window where the two ladies were sitting. Kate looked up from her work, and saw a lad playing among them whom she had not noticed before. "Who is that beautiful boy so well dressed, playing with Nettie by the oleander bush?" she said.

Mrs. Julian looked out too, and answered—"That is Vivian Bertram, the son of our village schoolmistress. The only thing I can blame about her is the expensive way in which she dresses that child; but if perfect beauty could excuse a mother's vanity, surely it might be found in Vivian. Is he not lovely?"

"He is indeed!" Kate said.

The boy on whom they looked had the fair, trans-

parent skin we often see in some of the old English aristocratic families. His eyes were very large and light blue ; but his hair, instead of being flaxen to complete the Saxon type, had caught a tint from some mixture of blood, and was the darkest shade of nut-brown, with golden hairs intermingled, that made it shine and glitter in the sunlight like a glory round his head. All his movements were independent and positive ; he gave the command, and the other little ones played as he directed.

Kate took in at a glance all I have described ; and turning to her friend, said, quickly—"Vivian Bertram—are you sure that is his name?"

"I am not sure of anything about him," Mrs. Julian answered ; "for the mother is as much above the situation as the child. You soon find that out when you converse with her. Her dress is studiously plain, almost like that of a Quakeress or a Roman Catholic devotee. She does the work of her house without a murmur, and attends strictly to the duties of her school."

"How can she do both?" said Kate.

"How indeed !" Mrs. Julian answered. "I asked her the question, and she told me she rose at five in the morning, cleaned up the house, and prepared any little necessities they might want through the day, as well as prepared breakfast. She told me she always arranged her table nicely, because she liked the child to be accustomed to refinement. Their

simple dinner they take after the afternoon school. I cannot make out that child or the mother either, for she is a most truthful, simple-minded woman. When the situation was given to her, and she had to answer some questions, on account of her having gone into the service of a Roman Catholic family when she first landed in the colony, she said she was called Mrs. Bertram. On being farther questioned, she said Bertram was not her real name, and declined to say what that was ; still she was so highly spoken of that she obtained the situation, and has fulfilled all her duties in the most exemplary way. I often call on her, and enjoy an hour's conversation with her ; but nothing will induce her to visit me, or leave her home for an hour even. When she requires to go to a shop, the boy goes with her ; she seldom loses sight of him, except when he comes to play with my little ones. Is it not strange?" Mrs. Julian said.

Kate had listened eagerly, and as soon as her friend paused, said—"Will you introduce me to her?"

Mrs. Smith did not answer at once, but looked rather uncomfortable. Then she said, "You will think my hesitating odd ; but Mrs. Bertram has so often refused to be introduced to the neighbours, that without rudeness to her I could not take a stranger there."

"Mine is no idle curiosity," Kate said. "Listen, and I will tell you my reason for wishing to see her." She then told Mrs. Julian Smith how her friendship for Mrs. Llewellyn began, and many incidents of Nelly's

life, as far as she knew it ; adding—"It will give me such joy to be able to ride home and tell John I have found her."

"You must not be too sanguine," Mrs. Julian said. "She may not turn out to be the person you seek ; and I have more to tell you, which I will do as we walk down to her cottage ; for of course, after what you have told me, I shall be happy to take you there ; and I see you are all impatient to be off."

Kate had risen, and was standing mid-way between the window and the door. Mrs. Julian Smith more deliberately gathered up her work, threw another log on the fire, glanced round to see if her husband's slippers were in their right place should he come in during their absence ; and taking a hat from off the hat-stand in the hall, said, "I am ready." Kate had been ready some minutes before, and was growing sorely impatient at her friend's deliberate movements.

CHAPTER LXI.

IN going through the garden they passed the group of children. The little Smiths all clustered round them. "Oh where are you going, mamma?—down to the village?—oh do let me go?" was uttered in many tones of entreaty. Young Vivian stood shyly and proudly aloof, pulling a flower to pieces.

"I do not want you this afternoon, any of you ; so go back to your play," Mrs. Julian said.

"Ah, but, mamma ——"

"No remonstrances : if you behave well, perhaps I may bring you back some lollies for the evening."

At which promise little Nettie cut some exceedingly queer capers behind the back of the two ladies, ending in a pirouette, to the delight of her brothers and sisters. Nettie was decidedly the comic element in the Smith family. Vivian looked on with some contempt in his young face.

Mrs. Smith said to him, "We are going to call on your mamma, Vivian—will you come?"

"No !" said the boy. "She is engaged ; she does not want you"

"Well, never mind ; we shall go and see ;" and the two ladies walked on. "He always says something like that to all who say anything about calling on his mother ; and if it were not that she is such a good teacher, her exclusive, unneighbourly conduct would have done her school very much harm. There is another thing I want to tell you before you see her. She is in wretched health. I am the only friend she will say anything to ; but she has told me her sufferings are very great. It is from some internal injury she received on a sea voyage, increased perhaps by the hard work she has had in providing for herself and her son ; but I never can persuade her to go to a doctor, though she is fearfully emaciated, and gets thinner and thinner every time I see her. She tells

me she has written her wishes concerning her boy, and has saved a little money for him ; and in the event of her death I have promised to see after him."

As Mrs. Smith told Kate this, they continued their walk through the garden, and then along a bridle-path skirting the brow of that range of hills. After winding in and out for a mile or more, the path descended by a steep roadway into the gully. There were not more than three cottages to be seen, and one of them was the schoolmistress's. It stood some little distance from the rest, on the far side of the creek from the road down which the ladies were walking, and consisted of only two rooms ; but it boasted a zinc roof and tank for water, and the small plot of ground was neatly railed in. The school-room was connected with a little church, a few steps only from the schoolmistress's garden. The garden itself was full of flowers, and the whole cottage nearly covered with dhollicus.

As they opened the garden-gate, Kate thought she saw a figure move from the door ; and when they entered the cottage, a chair remained, as though some one had been sitting there. They had scarcely entered, however, when the door of the inner room opened, and the schoolmistress stood before them. With a quiet, lady-like grace she welcomed them, and then seemed to wait to be told the object of their visit. Mrs. Julian Smith was evidently embarrassed, and Kate began to think they must be wrong ; for as Mrs. Smith talked on about the school and the garden and several little village matters, Kate had time to look at

the schoolmistress unobserved. There she sat by her friend, so fragile that the word shadow would almost apply to her; the figure clothed in a fine grey merino made high to the throat, and long nearly tight sleeves; the only ornament a tiny collar and cuffs spotlessly white; the collar fastened with a large beautifully-carved ebony cross. Her hair was cut short, and the front of it braided in two smooth braids under a tulle cap that set close round the face like a Quakeress's. Kate gazed in wonder. Could that be the proud, peerless beauty John had so often described to her? Could it be the original of that child-portrait they had at home? And yet as her eyes got accustomed to the shaded light in the room, her heart began to beat fast with hope; no dress could veil those large touching eyes, or alter the exquisite contour of the nose and mouth.

As Mrs. Smith's conversation began to flag, and the schoolmistress's answers were a few short weary words, Kate rose, and, crossing the room, sat down on the small sofa close beside her. Kate's heart was too full for much preface, and she said, in a low, earnest voice—"Do not think my visit an intrusion; I am seeking a lost friend of my husband's, one who is very dear to him as the child of his earliest friend." The schoolmistress started, and clasped her small hands together as they lay in her lap, apparently making a great effort to keep calm. Kate continued—"I have good news to tell her too, if I can find her. She is acknowledged by her husband's family, and her child will be heir to

the Vaughan estates. Sir Harry when last we heard was dying—is most likely dead by this time.”

The poor, fragile grey figure trembled now, and shook all over as in an ague fit; the head was bowed and the hands were clasped tighter and tighter, but she seemed unable to utter a word. Kate moved closer to her, and putting her arm around the trembling form drew her unresistingly to her side. The head drooped on Kate's shoulder with a stifled sob. Kate took one of the small hands in hers, and soothing her as she would an excited child, said—“You are Mrs. Vivian Vaughan—Nelly Llewellyn, of Llansketty, that used to be—are you not?”

A shower of tears and sobs now came to her relief, as each familiar word touched her heart. She tried to speak, but the words, “Father! mother!” were all she could articulate.

Kate said, “Do not agitate yourself; I will tell you all about them, and then you can ask me any questions. Your mother and Mrs. Morgan are well, and are living in Australia, very near here.”

The hands were again clasped together, and the trembling lips tried to form themselves into the word “Father.” Kate paused. Nelly (for it was she) sprang to her feet, and stood before Kate with parted lips and eyes that “*cut one*,” as Kate said afterwards. The tears were arrested on her long eyelashes, and in motionless agony she waited for Kate's words.

“Your father before he died left a note for you, in which he said he forgave you—indeed, had never felt

anger, only sorrow, for you ; and he died quietly and without pain."

She listened to the words, and her figure seemed to shrink down on her knees ; then lower still, till she crouched, with her face buried in her hands, at Kate's feet, moaning out the words, "I broke his heart ! I broke his heart !"

The two ladies wept in silent sympathy for a few minutes, and then they persuaded the poor sufferer to lie down on her bed, and helped her there. When she was a little recovered, Kate said, smilingly, "You have have not asked who I am ; so I must introduce myself. I am the wife of John Davies."

A smile flitted over Nelly's face. "Dear, good, kind John ! my more than brother !" she said.

Kate squeezed her hand most energetically, and said, in her old self-reliant tone, taking into her own hands the trouble of everything—"I shall not tell you any more this afternoon ; but I shall hasten home and make arrangements for you to meet your mother and Bessie at my house to-morrow. So keep as quiet as you can, that you may look well for your mother's sake."

"And I shall keep Vivian with me till eight o'clock, and then walk down with him myself, and see how you are," Mrs. Julian Smith said.

Nelly said a few words about the trouble she gave.

"Oh, nonsense about trouble !" they both said together ; "there is a fine moon, and it will be a pleasant walk."

CHAPTER LXII.

WHEN they left the cottage, the two ladies walked quickly back ; Mrs. Julian Smith in a perfect maze of wonder at what she had heard, and Mrs. Davies overflowing with delight at the joyful news she could carry home. She could hardly restrain herself sufficiently to keep pace with the more moderate movements of her companion. "I shall order the horse," Kate said, as they approached the house ; "take a cup of tea while he is being got ready, and then be off as quickly as I can."

"I cannot bear the idea of your going out so late," Mrs. Julian Smith said ; "it will be dark soon."

"Never mind, I know the road," Mrs. Davies answered ; "and I *must* go. I could not remain here with the news I have to tell them. I shall want to send early in the morning to Mrs. Morgan and her mother. Aunt, too, is staying there. Then I shall want also to have a trap ready for John ; so that when he comes in from Adelaide, he can take dinner and be ready to drive over here without losing any time. I know that will be his wish. So don't say any more about my late ride ; the moon will be up soon, and I shall be home in an hour and a half."

"Well, if you will go," Mrs. Julian answered, "I shall send a man with you." And giving the order for the two horses to be brought to the door, they entered the house.

Mrs. Davies had to change her dress and take her tea. By the time she had done that, the moon was rising. Kate's ride home was a pleasant one; her heart was so full of thankfulness for those she loved. It had often been a subject of deep regret to her that she could not remove the shadow that would darken the happiest moments of her home when any passing allusion reminded them of their lost Nelly. Now she was taking them such joy. She would not think despondingly of Nelly's health; good nursing, rest and happiness, would make her all right, she thought. She guided her horse along the *native road*, which means a rather more open space than the rest of the forest, where some trees have been cut or burned down, leaving the stumps sticking up, it would seem, for the express purpose of upsetting all vehicles which should dare to invade their realm after dark. But Kate was on a good old colonial horse that knew a stump from a black fellow, and picked his way in and out with amazing instinct. Though Kate often started at the queer figures the stumps assumed in the flickering light, *he* never wavered, but carried her safely home, and did not stop until he got to the lodge-gate.

Kate's return at that hour excited some surprise among the servants. The man who accompanied her was taken care of in the kitchen. A neat tray, with something good for a hungry person, was sent up by cook to her mistress; who then gave her orders for an early breakfast, and also for the bedrooms to be got ready for the reception of her friends the next day.

She ordered a horse and messenger to be prepared to start early in the morning. Tired as she was, she told the servant to bring her writing-desk, and then, dismissing her for the night, sat down to write to Mrs. Morgan. She gave an account of her finding Nelly; told Bessie she had arranged to bring Nelly and her son to Yarrapinga; that she intended starting for Nelly as soon after John's return as possible; "so when you arrive, if you find we have left, you must wait with what patience you can. John and I will not lose an hour in bringing her home."

Having finished her letter and made all her arrangements, she felt there was more chance of a good night's rest. Though very much worn out with her day's excitement, she lingered about her bedroom a long time before going to rest. She smoothed her baby's blankets, and leant on the side of the cot, looking at it, and thought of Mrs. Llewellyn. She clasped her little white hand into a small fist. I do not know if she thought at the moment she could fight all the wickedness there was in the world; but her eyes filled with tears, and her fair cheek flushed as she murmured, "Oh, if any selfish fiend stole one of my babies, and crushed all the happiness out of its life!—poor Nelly!"

The next morning Kate rose refreshed, and ready for her busy day. Two hours earlier than she expected, the Morgans, Mrs. Llewellyn and Miss Digby arrived; Mrs. Llewellyn in such a state of excitement that they thought it best to let her go with John and Kate, as the fatigue of the ride would not be so bad for her as

having to wait; and then Bessie looked with longing eyes at Kate.

"Suppose you take my place?" Kate said to Bessie. "Though you do not know Mrs. Julian Smith, John does; you will only have to call there to learn the road to the cottage, and I will stay at home and prepare for my guests."

"Thank you, Kate! it is most kind of you to forego the pleasure I know it would be to you to take your husband there; but I do so long to go, it makes me selfish," Bessie said, with tears in her eyes.

"Nonsense! you shall go; it is best. The first meeting should be with you three, without any other. But here comes John; I know the sound of his horse's feet!" and away she ran out into the garden and down the drive. It was his horse's feet, but they were a good way off; and she had time to get to the lodge before she met him.

CHAPTER LXIII.

AFTER John's anxiety on the previous day, it was pleasant to see his wife coming down the drive to meet him, looking more than usually blooming with the flush excitement had given her. His next thought, however, was still fear. "Are the children all well?" he said, as he drew up the trap and got down. When he took her hand he looked eagerly into her face.

"Send the carriage to the stables by Tom ; he is at work here," she said in a whisper, pointing to a man mending the roadway. "I have so much to tell you !"

He did as she wished, and followed her to the stump of a gum tree a few steps from the path. She seated herself on it, and said, "I tremble so, I could not tell you standing."

He sat down beside her, and putting his strong arm round her, said—"What is it has so unnerved you, my wife?"

She looked up at him with all her soul speaking in her face, and said, "Nelly is found !" and burst into a passionate flood of tears.

"Thank God !" John said, devoutly raising his hat and remaining silent for a minute. Then looking down on his wife, he said, "But why do you weep so, my Kate?"

"I do not know," she answered, tremblingly ; "except that I know how you loved her, that your happiness was not complete till she was found ; and then perhaps the excitement of all I did yesterday without your help and sympathy has upset me ; it is nothing beside."

"You do not doubt my loyalty—my love for you, Kate ? Look up in my face and tell me so, my wife," he said, in a tone of deep tenderness.

She did look in his face, and then laid her head to rest a few moments on his shoulder, and never doubted more. As they walked up to the house she told him of all her arrangements ; and in less than an hour he

was driving over the road Kate had travelled the day before, with Mrs. Llewellyn on the seat behind, and Bessie beside him.

I have said somewhere the holiest feelings of our nature are unspoken. There are moments in life that cannot be described ; and I shall pass over the meeting of Nelly with Mrs. Llewellyn, Bessie and John. The mother and child were re-united on this side the "bridge of death." The father waited yet beyond ; but we believe he rested patiently in the love of God. He knew its wondrous power now.

The day had been almost too much for Nelly's strength ; so that soon after their arrival at Yarrapinga, she went to her mother's bedroom, and in its quiet rest began to realize her new-found happiness. Vivian wandered in and out about the large, well-kept house ; shyly at first, but very soon assuming his dictatorial way, giving the word of command to Arthur and Cora, and leading the games, as was his wont at the village school. When he grew tired of play himself, he unceremoniously left it, quite regardless of what his companions wished, and took a book, or strolled away into the beautiful gardens. At first he was slightly put out that his mother was too ill to wait on him ; but when he found others contributed to his comfort quite as carefully, he ceased to worry her. A clever doctor and good nursing did a very great deal for Nelly, though not quite as much as Kate hoped for.

Six months of quiet happiness passed away. Letters had been sent to Lady Vaughan by the first mail after

Nelly's re-union with her family, telling that lady of the important fact that the heir to her family honours had been found ; and answers had come back giving the poor young mother some new pain. Lady Vaughan and all the members of that family thought Sir Vivian (as they styled him) should be sent to England for his education ; and a civil invitation to Nelly that she should make her mother-in-law's house her home accompanied the request.

John also had letters from Mr. Barker, telling him it was a good time to sell his property in Wales, as there was a Company wanting to purchase the land ; and he thought John might never have such another chance.

So the matter was talked over and discussed. The boy was wild to go. He promised his mother he should come back when he was a man and see her ; and seemed to think she could not possibly want more. At first Nelly thought of going with him, until the doctor told her the fatigue of the voyage would most likely kill her ; and her friends pressed on her the thought, that even if she were living in Wales she would see very little of her son. At Eton and Oxford most of his time would be spent ; and all the weary months of his school and college life she would have to spend with Lady Vaughan and her three maiden daughters. Nelly felt that death was a much happier fate than such a doom, and yielded to the wishes of those around her. She was very proud of the beauty and intellectual promise of her child. He had his

father's beauty, his mother's intellect, and his grandmother's cold heart, though the last trait of character Nelly was very slow to see. She said he was not demonstrative, and would grow more affectionate ; and the fond hearts around her tried to cherish the hope for her sake.

Miss Digby thought it was a very good opportunity for her to put in practice an idea that had long been on her mind—that of going to England and seeing to the necessities of some of her single nieces, Kate's sisters ; for Lady Digby had died the year after they left England. It was finally determined that John and Miss Digby should go to the old country ; take Vivian with them ; leave him with his grandmamma to educate ; finish their own business as quickly as they could, and then return.

Kate was in a state of great excitement between her husband and her children. She wanted to go with him, and she did not like to leave them ; and John would not hear of taking all the children to England, when perhaps he should not remain more than two months on shore.

Amid tears and smiles and promises and hopes and fears, the busy preparations went on for the travellers. They were to go overland, because letters could be sent from the different stopping-places every mail, and there was not such a weary time to wait for the first news. Kate and Nelly would hear of no refusal to their wish of going down to Adelaide and seeing the last of John and Vivian ; so Mr. and Mrs. Morgan

joined the party to take care of the ladies on their way back.

Mrs. Llewellyn remained with the children ; she and Nelly had accepted an invitation to spend a few months with Mrs. Davies at Yarrapinga after John left. Kate and Nelly had formed a strong friendship for one another. The sisterly love which Nelly had always felt for John filled her heart again with something of its lost happiness ; thoughts of her father seemed so mingled with the memory of that old affection ; and now she could let it flow unchecked around his children, who were very dear to her. Their young hearts were as loving and warm as her own boy's was cold and self-contained. Mr. and Mrs. Morgan were well pleased that Nelly should have the task of helping to cheer Kate and share her maternal duties ; for it would not give her time to dwell on her own sorrow.

It is a sad parting, that long journey to the old country, though perhaps in a year or more we may see our loved ones again. All tried to look happier than they felt, as they packed themselves into the carriage and waved their last adieus to the little group standing under the veranda. "You must be sure to come the day after to-morrow, mamma," called out little Cora ; "and papa as soon as he can."

"Yes, dear, I shall come back to-morrow," Kate answered, with a tearful smile.

"Good-bye, Vivian," Arthur shouted, as the carriage got farther away. Vivian was too far to answer, but he waved his cap round his head, his beautiful eyes

sparkling with delight. Young as he was, the thought of all he was going to see more than consoled him in the sorrow of parting from his mother. Even Adelaide was charming; the hotel and the shops delighted him.

There were many little forgotten things to purchase. John had sent his heavy luggage to the port by a trusty man; but still they found quite enough to do until an hour somewhat late for Vivian to be out of bed. When he was quite tired out, the poor mother took him to her room, and put him to bed for the last time, and tucked the clothes around him—oh, how fondly!—then watched him fall asleep. She could not leave him yet, but still sat there beside him, and prayed and thought until she could almost fancy the other Vivian stood beside her. Then she prayed for him too (fond, foolish heart!)—a wild prayer it was; but she was beside her sleeping child alone with her God. He knew the struggles of that suffering spirit; He would have pity and listen with tenderness to her cry for mercy.

After a time she went down to wish them good-night; but soon returned, to keep watch, I fear, rather than sleep, for she was very white the next morning when they met at breakfast; and Kate was not much better. Mr. Morgan was glad they had to be on board the packet by eleven o'clock, because there was less time to think. John and Kate had made many friends, and of these a not small number met them when they got out of the railway carriage at the port;

so amid hearty good wishes he went on board. Now it had really come to saying good-bye to mamma, Vivian broke down, and cried so tempestuously that it took the attention of all to comfort him. John whispered a word to weeping Kate; they went below for a few minutes. When they came up, he held his wife's hand in his, and putting it into Nelly's, he said softly, "Go now—God bless and keep you!" Taking the weeping boy in his arms, he went below.

Mr. Morgan handed them across the plank on to the wharf. He found they would have to wait for a train; so gladly availed himself of a carriage that was returning to Adelaide. It had brought a party down to the packet, and Mr. Morgan made an agreement with the driver to take them all back. Kate and Nelly looked through their tears at the vessel, and saw it was off. And they were glad to seek the shelter of the carriage and hide their anguish.

CHAPTER LXIV.

ONE evening, about eight months after the parting at the port, our friends were assembled in Kate's house at Yarrapinga. The hot season was far advanced; for it was the day before Christmas-day, and Kate had gathered her friends around her to make the time pass as happily as she could. They were to have a large dinner party on Christmas-day, and their living so

far in the country entailed the necessity of preparing many impromptu beds ; and Bessie had come down a few days before to help. It had been getting hotter and hotter for a week past, and on the plains the people were grumbling sadly at the arrangements of Providence ; but at Yarrapinga the house was so well built and in such a fine situation, that they did not feel so much inconvenience. It was sheltered from the north hot wind by a thick forest of gum trees ; and in the house the rooms were so large and lofty, they could shut it close during the extreme heat of the day, without feeling the discomfort that those living in smaller houses did. Still it was everywhere hot, and all were disposed to lounge about and be very idle. The children had had their baths, and under their mosquito curtains were sleeping quietly, their limbs, as they kicked off the bed-clothes, looking "like wax-works," nurse said ; and through the white lace of the curtains they did look like fairies asleep. The ladies stood admiring them for a few minutes, and then walked through the house and opened all the windows to let in the cool night air when it did come. At present all was still and hot and stifling.

"Oh, dear !" said Kate, throwing herself on a cane lounge in the veranda, "it is hotter outside than in ; but I think we shall get a change soon, for the dust is rising on the plains."

Nelly came and sat down on an ottoman close to Kate, and leant back against the seat Kate was on. Mrs. Llewellyn sat on the steps. She seemed to think

the farther she could get out-of-doors the cooler she should be. As for Bessie, she sat bolt upright on a stool. She was so hot, she said, she could not bear to touch anywhere. Mr. Morgan was standing by laughing at her. "I don't believe you feel it half as much as I do," she said; "it is the only drawback to our Australian life: but such days as these are wearisome indeed."

"So they are, Bessie—so they are," he said, with a merry expression of mock sorrow; at the same time lifting from the back of her neck a thick coil of hair. "Does not all this make you very hot?" he said.

"Hot! yes, of course it does; I wish I had not a bit of it."

"That is a figure of speech, I suppose," he continued, laughing. "Poor Bessie!"

The lights were brought into the drawing-room, but nobody seemed inclined to move; the night being so oppressive, there were many insects of different kinds flying about, and close to the lamp it was quite disagreeable to sit, for they swarmed around the light, fascinated by its brightness. After a while, Kate said to Nelly, "You have never fulfilled your promise of telling us what became of you after your recovery from the fever you had at St. Ann's house in Canada. Do you feel equal to it to-night, dear?"

"Yes," Nelly answered, quietly; "I should like to tell you, for it is a story of Christ-like goodness to me and to my child."

As she sat at Kate's feet, a bright ray of light from

the lamp rested on her slight, elegant form. Owing to her delicate health, her hair had not been allowed to grow long, and it curled in soft nearly white curls around her well-shaped head. The glorious crown of hair the fond mother had prized so much was gone, and in its place the thin grey curls told their sad story. She had not changed the style of dress she wore when she was restored to her home ; and as she spent much of her time in visiting wherever there was sickness or want, the people in their neighbourhood often set about the report that she was a Roman Catholic lady. When Kate put the question to her, it was with some hesitation, for they always avoided speaking of the past as much as they could ; but Nelly's answer re-assured her, her tone was so quiet and self-reliant. The two great sorrows of her life (her husband's wickedness and her father's broken heart) had done their work. Nelly no longer lived for herself ; she had work to do yet in this state of discipline, and she would try to do it cheerfully and well, and so thankfully ; for God had given her back very much to cheer her way. Bessie, David, John, and this new-found, warm-hearted Kate, and, best of all, her mother, were still left to her. Now, as she answered Kate, she shaded her eyes for a moment with her hand. They all drew closer round her, and she said, in a low voice, "I can never tell you all they were to me, Kathleen and St. Ann, and the dear mother Felicity too. I know it was their earnest hope I should become a Roman Catholic ; but that could never be. I must live and die in the faith my father

taught me." She paused to command her voice, and continued—"After that night, when Sister Kathleen took me to St. Ann's, I lay for many weeks insensible to all around me (so they told me), and raved about my home so wildly, that they knew all your names. By very slow degrees I was restored to consciousness, and even now I am sometimes haunted by the dreamy fancies that flitted over my brain during that recovery. It was the custom at St. Ann's, when patients were convalescent, to send them away with a small present; but St. Ann and Kathleen loved me." She looked up at the starry sky, and then on the ground for a minute, and said, in a still lower tone, "How much I have to be thankful for in the friends that helped me! God is indeed very good." Then there was a pause. When she went on again to speak, she had regained composure, and continued—"St. Ann is at rest. She died from exhaustion, brought on by nursing fever patients during a very unhealthy season at Montreal, where she volunteered her help. And Kathleen is Superior of St. Ann's. I hear from her now and then." Smiling at Kate, she continued—"By the time I was sufficiently recovered from the fever to leave, as other patients would have done, Kathleen and St. Ann had heard all my story; they knew I had no home to go to, and they made arrangements to protect me until after Vivian's birth. There was a warm, well-built, comfortable cottage at the first avenue gate, in which la mère Felicity used to live, that she might be able to attend the gate night or day. It was very seldom

any one came to that entrance at night ; and she was so useful in the large house, that St. Ann, at 'the mother's' own request, removed her, and gave me the use of her cottage ; paying me at the same time enough to live on, for what they were pleased to call my labour in attending the gate. It was at that time I adopted my present dress, wishing to appear as much like the Sisters as I could ; with the exception of the cap, it was the dress of the young lady pensioners. I taught, too, in the classes of the school connected with the St. Ann's establishment, music and German and English ; that enabled me to pay a help, who did the most of the house-work, and opened the gate when strangers came. How thankful I was for such a home ! The rest it afforded me did me very much good. Up in the large house I should have been expected to attend all the religious services, though in spirit I could not have joined them. The only thing I dreaded was the long, lonely evenings ; but I made it my business at that time to prepare for my classes and look over exercises. I taught the young French-Canadian girl who was my servant to read and write English also ; and by such means my evenings, instead of being dull, were a great good to me. Many of my leisure hours were spent among the rocks by the side of the river ; but that was a dangerous pleasure, for it gave me time to think : and at St. Ann's request I gave it up for a time, for thought of the past unnerved me. After Vivian was born, I renewed my walks by the river, and spent many, indeed nearly all my

spare hours there: the rushing water soothed and pleased him when he was a baby; and as he grew older, the stones and boy-treasures he found were a never-ending source of delight and amusement to him. Five years of peace passed by; then I began to fear they would make a Roman Catholic of my boy, for he was very much taken with the chapel services and the music. The time was coming, too, when they would want him to enter a Roman Catholic school for boys, under the management of the priests who visited St. Ann's; and though I shrank with horror from the far-off world, I made up my mind it would be best to go and work for my child elsewhere. Kind, noble-hearted, gentle Kathleen! I told her the whole truth; told her I dare not bring up Llewellyn's grandson other than a Protestant. She sorrowed for the tie that prevented me becoming a member of the true Church (as she thought it); but she had not lived among God's most glorious works in vain. She was no bigot; and as she could not give me rest within the domain of St. Ann's after Vivian was eight years old, unless we both professed the Romish faith, she did her best to help me otherwise. She knew a Roman Catholic family, then living in this colony, who wanted a governess; and it was arranged I should have the place, and Vivian was to live with me. I left St. Ann's, and travelled to New York under the charge of a priest; and by his care and kindness obtained our passage on board a ship coming here. When I arrived I was received with courtesy by Sister Kathleen's friends;

but I found Vivian a sad drawback with other children. Fortunately, a short time after I came to my situation, business matters took the family to Victoria. I declined going with them, and applied through Mrs. Julian Smith for the situation of schoolmistress, where you found me."

The soft, low voice ceased ; and as they looked out into the starry night, each heart beat with thankfulness for the mercy that had sheltered their wanderer. Mrs. Llewellyn rose from her place, and came and seated herself on the lounge Kate sat on. Nelly did not speak, but rested her head on her mother's knee. It was almost like the old happy times, before wild, unregulated love had entered their paradise. She rested there, quietly looking out among the bright stars on this Christmas-eve, and could almost fancy she heard her father's voice speaking those words of pardon that he had written,—words engraven on her heart. The paper had been given her ; and, carefully enclosing it, she wore it about her night and day. She had another relic that she hid in her dress ; it was a curl of Vivian Vaughan's hair, cut before their marriage, when she thought him good and true ; and the only will she ever would make was, that these two trifles might be buried with her.

CHAPTER LXV.

KATE had listened very earnestly to Nelly's narrative, but she thought it best not to make any comment on it now, though she had decidedly fallen in love with Kathleen, Protestant all over though she herself was. Even aunt Digby, she thought, must allow there might be some good people worshippers in the Church of Rome; but she changed the subject by saying, "How hot the sky looks! The very stars have a glowing, lurid look about them."

"Yes," said Bessie. "But listen; here comes the change: the wind is rising: it is coming from the west, and the dust is up. Look down the gully road."

"So it is," Kate answered. "Make haste—in quick, or we shall not get all the windows shut before the storm is upon us."

They ran different ways, and had only time to close the house before the wind was raging round it, bending the saplings nearly to the ground, and snapping off the dead branches from the old trees, and bringing with it rushing clouds of dust that covered everything, indoors and out.

It was too late to seek employment indoors; so, after taking some refreshment, and seeing all secure against the storm outside, which still blew furiously, they went to bed, Kate visiting the nursery last of all, and lingering by the children's cots, thinking of John, and fancying what he might be doing; she hoped he

was on the water by this time on his way back. They were all somewhat disturbed in the night by some heavy claps of thunder ; but when they assembled at breakfast the next morning, it was with every variety of exclamation about the loveliness of the day. The thunder had brought with it a heavy rain, that had washed all traces of the dust away, and given new life to the drooping flowers and trees. After the past weeks of dry, hot weather, it was a most delicious change.

The meal over, Cora and Arthur (who had been waiting until they might do so) rushed into the room with a large basket of flowers the gardener had trusted them with.

"The wind has blown the trees about so, and there are such lots and lots of apricots on the ground !" Cora exclaimed.

"Bushels," George said.

Arthur added, "Well, we must pick them up and make jam of them."

Kate smilingly answered ; then, with a glance at her basket of flowers, she said, "Bessie, look here ! Nelly, come and feast your eyes all of you ! Here are some sprigs of real holly. It is very kind of George ; he must have been up early and taken a long ride to get it, for there is none growing in any of the gardens near here."

"Let me see, let me see !" said Cora, tipping on her toes to get a better sight ; and when it was held to her she said, "Oh, is that all ?"

"Yes ; don't you see those pretty red berries ?" Bessie said.

"I can get some prettier, and without pricks to them," Cora answered, rather contemptuously.

"Come, let us be off, young Australia," Mr. Morgan said, calling the children by a name he often used ; "we can pick up apricots, and see if there are any fine peaches ripe for mamma's grand dinner to-day ; and only think how the rain will make the grapes grow !"

"There are cherries too," Cora put in ; and sliding her hand confidently in Mr. Morgan's, she whispered, "I think we shall find a few ripe strawberries down near the creek, where George has been taking so much pains to make them get ripe for to-day ; and Arthur and I are going to dine in the parlour with you and all of them. Oh, but it will be jolly !"

This was to be a busy day, for each had something to prepare, and they went their several ways with happy, busy faces. Nelly took charge of the two youngest children, thereby freeing nurse for more active service. It was a great treat to the children to be with aunt Nelly, as they called her, and they went off now to play in their favourite spot by the creek, and revel in the warm sunshine and the sparkling water. Arthur and Cora were with Mr. Morgan, picking fruit, so Nelly had only baby, a splendid fellow of about twenty months old, who rejoiced in the name of John Llewellyn Davies, but was always called baby. The father had made one request, that Llewellyn should be added to any other name Kate chose, so that all

the children were named after his lost friend. There was only one more that I have not mentioned, and that was Alice, a little golden-haired girl of three years, who was holding on to Nelly's dress as they walked, and asking some most unanswerable questions about things in general, and more particularly why it was Christmas, and, when she was told, wanting also to know "if they had Christmas-day in heaven?"—which question Nelly answered by sending her off to try and catch a butterfly that she saw just before them.

CHAPTER LXVI.

THE Christmas-day at Yarrapinga gave very great enjoyment to those friends of Mrs. Davies who were present, and added to her popularity as a pleasant hostess; but it had passed. There had been some weeks of dreadfully hot weather; then a splendid vintage; and Kate was uncommonly busy, looking on at the making of some wine, which she called "Kate-comos," and intended in a few years it should rival John's best. Kate begged Mrs. Llewellyn and Nelly to remain with her until after John's return, and they were happy to do so, for they felt of more use now than before.

John had been a very regular correspondent, and each mail had brought long letters from him to Kate, and Nelly had received letters regularly from Miss

Vaughan. That had been at John's request, and the kind, well-bred young lady acceded to it and kept her promise, and became a constant correspondent of Nelly's for years. But the two or three last mails had been silent ones for Kate. John was on the water, and of course did not write. She grew more restless and less bright, and a tear would tremble on her eyelashes as she played with her baby. Kate attributed her weakness to the heat of the weather, which had been very *abominable*, as Bessie would have said. The last two weeks had reduced all people to a limp, moist, damp and uncomfortable state of body. But just when they were all thinking they could not bear it any longer, came the first early rain—the glorious rain. With it they had two or three stormy days that made Kate's heart ache; for all her thoughts were on the sea, and she hoped now *he* was not near enough to feel the weather they had on shore. But it turned the brown, dried-up country into paradise again, and a fortnight after the view from the veranda down the gully was as beautiful as when John left it just a twelvemonth ago.

The French windows were open in a morning room, and the children were running in and out. Nelly was sitting on a low seat playing with them and singing snatches of songs, to their great delight—some of the merry old Llansketty songs. She heard of her boy every month; heard how happy he was in the grand home of his father; how well he adapted himself to

the state that surrounded him ; and her unselfish heart rejoiced that he was happy in his own way. "I could not have done my duty to him," she would murmur to herself, "or fitted him for the rank he will fill. Our separation is only till his education is finished ; and then I will go to him, or he will come to me." And so she stifled her regrets in the memory of her many mercies, and was so quietly happy and cheerful, that her presence in the house was like a benediction. On this day, while Nelly was playing with and singing to the children, Mrs. Davies and Mrs. Llewellyn were sauntering among the flower-beds. "I do so long for news from Melbourne," Kate said. "I should think John would be sure to send a telegram as soon as he arrives there."

Mrs. Llewellyn was about to answer, when she saw Mr. Morgan riding up the drive. "Why what has brought David here this morning? I thought he was going to Adelaide to-day or to-morrow."

"He is so kind," Kate replied, "I am afraid he has come all this way out of his route to see if I want anything from town."

By this time he was beside them, and Nelly and the children ran out to meet him, Cora, who was his pet, climbing up for a kiss. He drew a large-sized letter from his pocket, and whispered to Cora, "Give this to mamma." But Kate had caught sight of the large envelope, and springing forward exclaimed, "The telegram !"

"Yes," Mr. Morgan said, while she read it, "they have arrived safely at Melbourne, and will be here by the next steamer."

Kate was too happy for companionship ; she went to her own room to calm down a little, and for the next few days was restless and busy from morning till night. Her letters from her aunt had told her all about her sisters. Two of them had married ; two had entered religious houses in France ; and the two youngest preferred to remain with a friend in Paris, where their small income was sufficient to pay for their board, rather than come out to Australia and live with their Protestant sister ; so Miss Digby was returning with John alone.

The news soon passed through the house, and all were on the alert to have things in their best order for the master. For the next three days Arthur and Cora did little else but run about the veranda and give false alarms of steamers coming up the gulf, and Kate had so often ran to the window and been disappointed, that when on the third morning they came rushing into her bedroom before she was dressed, shouting, "It is coming now !—it is coming now !"—she looked out with only half-believing eyes. But in a moment all was changed. "It is indeed a steamer, and too large to be a coasting one ! That is papa, my darlings ! We shall have him home to-night !"

"Hurrah !" said Arthur. "Hurrah !" echoed Cora and Alice, in their piping, treble voices ; little Alice

tipping about the room on her toes in a sort of ecstatic outburst of fun, because everybody else was so happy.

"Look, look at the smoke—what a long way it goes!" said Cora; "all along the gulf, till it goes up into the clouds. Look, Alice; that smoke is bringing papa home!"

A soft knock came to the door. "Come in," Kate said. Nelly opened it. "You see the steamer," she said, and with the morning kiss she whispered her words of congratulation. They went to the window and looked out towards the sea in silent thankfulness.

"Come, children, come with me," Nelly said, "and we will make the tea for breakfast, and let us leave mamma to dress herself in peace."

CHAPTER LXVII.

HOME! It is a word of many meanings. To some, how sacred and holy are the thoughts that cling round it; to others, what passions and angry scenes are hidden from the world there—mean, miserable feelings and doings, of which the fellow-mortals beyond must know nothing and see nothing! On the outside there is the affectation of all the virtues. Life in such places is one long lie.

John's home was bright and happy with truth and love—nothing to hide there; and when he said, "Home once more, my Kate!" he raised his hat for

a moment, with a prayer of thanksgiving too big for words.

The first meeting we must pass over (such hours are among the unspoken joys of life), and take a peep at them two or three days after his return. He has been walking about his place a great part of the day, delighted with the growth of everything; for he had arrived a short time after the first rains. The pleasant English custom of dressing for the evening was kept up at Yarrapinga, though it was so far from town life; and fresh and bright and happy they all looked as they gathered round the wood fire after tea. Kate revelled in the wood fires, and in her secret heart thought nobody's fires so bright and good as her own. Bessie used to say, "Of course they were very bright, but then Kate had always three logs burning." On this evening Kate's fire was perfection, and John stretched out his long legs beside it with great satisfaction. He had been trying ever since he came home to make friends with baby, who still kept him at a respectful distance, and gazed at his beard from mamma's shoulder in silent amazement. Kate had expected the beard; she believed in everything manly; but baby, accustomed to Mr. Morgan's smooth-shaven face, still held out, and would by no means trust himself too close to that appendage.

"Whom do you think I saw at Melbourne, Kate?" John said, looking smilingly into the fire.

"Dr. and Mrs. Dduff, you told me. I am so glad they are successful."

"Yes ; the doctor has a capital practice, and Mrs. Dduff is delicious ; more moony than ever. The wee nose is disappearing fast from observation, lost in the immensity of her cheeks and the amazing rubbings it gets ; for her disapprobation of current prices at Melbourne keeps her in constant excitement. 'And the doctor will have good dinners, you know, Mr. Davies,' she said to me, rubbing the tip straight up, in her absence of mind and her regret at the expenditure." He smiled at the remembrance, and added, "She is a capital old lady—the best fun I know. But I saw some other friends ; they are good patients of the doctor's too ; they have a baby almost every year."

"Oh, I know !" Kate exclaimed ; "it is Mrs. Primley. Is she at the top of the visiting list at Government House yet ?"

"No ; she looks down with great disdain on all such worldly ways, and has taken to strong sentiments on religious matters, and to millinery. The appointment Primley got did not suit her ; the income was not to her taste ; so she altered her mind about position and society, and returned to her old business and hard work ; took a large shop, and is doing one of the finest businesses in Melbourne—making her fortune, in point of fact. She finds employment for Primley somewhere in the back of the house, among the small fry, and allows him one glass of gin-and-water at night ; which fact he told me with grateful emotion, though I should think, from appearances, he manages to get something somewhere in the course of the day

besides that little indulgence. I suppose he is grateful to Providence for giving him such a wife ; for he said to me with tears in his eyes, 'She's a wonderful woman, Mr. Davies !' I got a peep into the show-room, and saw some of the fair ladies there, Miss Primley among them, who is going to be married to some soft fellow in the bush. Her mamma was in great excitement, for the wedding was soon coming off, and Mrs. Primley was superintending the 'trousseau' of the bride, she told me, whatever that may be," John said, laughing.

"Just fancy, Kate," Bessie said, "that little dirty girl that was always sniffing and watching about the cabin doors for what she could hear !"

"Well, I assure you she is a very tolerable piece of pink and white humanity now," John said, "with a crinoline—oh, my !—it covers, I won't say how much ; and the little hat she had on that topped it all was most amazing. I made a quick retreat, for I was afraid she was going to ask me to take a walk with her. Mrs. Primley sent all sorts of loves to you ; said, 'Hi'm sure Mrs. Davies will sympathize with my motherly 'art.'"

"What a shame to laugh at her !" Mrs. Llewellyn said, half laughing herself. "She really deserves a great deal of credit for the hard work that is in her ; and if it were not for her ridiculous affectation, she would be very much respected."

"Yes," Bessie said ; "but one cannot help laughing at her ; her unfortunate propensity of making a hash

of her h's is a truly comic element in her pomposity."

"My dear, I wish you would earn an income for me, and give me a glass of toddy every night," Mr. Morgan said, laughing; "but, alas! I am not so blessed; and this fine rain reminds me there is much work to do at home; so we must be off to-morrow, Bessie, and end this pleasant holiday."

"Must you indeed go?" John and Kate said together.

Miss Digby looked over her spectacles, as was her habit, and smiled benignantly on them. "Mrs. Llewellyn and Mrs. Vaughan, I suppose, will remain at Yarrapinga yet awhile," she said.

"No, I think not. My mother and sister will go with us. They will soon be moving into Nelly's own house; and as that is close here, I shall not see so much of them as you will," Bessie answered.

When John was in Wales, he saw a great deal of Lady Vaughan; and that lady, having acknowledged Nelly as her son's wife, was by no means the person to do things by halves; she also comforted herself by thinking of the old Welsh blood that flowed in the Llewellyn veins. She was grateful to Nelly, in her proud way, for having parted with the child; and, looking upon Nelly now as a Vaughan, she was anxious that her income should be proportioned to her rank, as long as she chose to remain with her mother.

John undertook to be Nelly's man of business; and the first thing they did after John's return was to take

a house and grounds for a term of years. The estate belonged to an absentee ; and when John's letters had told Nelly of Lady Vaughan's generous wishes, Nelly selected this as her future home, and only waited John's return to complete the arrangements. The house was now full of workmen, preparing it for Mrs. Vaughan and her mother.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

NELLY'S Australian home ! It seemed to her like a resting-place half-way to heaven, where her father waited. That thought mingled itself with every prayer, with every hope.

Each mail brought with it news of her son and of his progress, and she was content to wait without him, by her mother's side, until his education was finished ; then there might be other arrangements ; but they were in the future. Nelly had learnt the value of ennobling and beautifying the present. Her home was one of the most finished and attractive that the new country could boast of. The house was situated on the opposite side of the gully to that of Mr. Davies's, about a mile below his, towards the plains. It commanded a lovely view of the valley, and the same creek that watered his grounds wound in and out through Nelly's domain. The land just round the

house was reserved for flowers and flowering-shrubs ; and clumps of English trees were growing among the cultivated native ones, looking most bright and beautiful by contrast. The house was surrounded by a broad double veranda, the second story of which was covered with creeping plants, as thickly almost as below. Nelly could not bear to have her beautiful shrubs clipped and kept in order ; and unless they intruded on the paths, they were allowed to grow in wild luxuriance, forming a thick cover for innumerable little birds of exquisite beauty, that are rarely seen except in such places ; for the gum trees being so high, the plumage of the birds that shelter in their branches is not seen from below.

It was a great delight to Nelly to rise early on fine mornings and enjoy the view from the second veranda, watching the morning light as it came creeping on, changing all things into such unspeakable beauty ; making the young gum trees, like the fairy trees in our children's story books, seem studded all over with gold and silver. The noon-day partly destroyed the charm ; but as the sun fell low and evening crept on, the spell began to work again, and words cannot describe the soft, feathery lightness of the foliage in the waning light. The broad verandas often resounded to the merry voices of children ; for John's young ones loved to make raids upon aunt Nelly, and they were as often to be found with her as at their own home.

It was Nelly's and John's mission to keep active the literary tastes of their circle ; and all the best

works of the day were to be found at Yarrapinga or Mrs. Vaughan's. Nelly's music, too, came back with time, and the pleasure of pleasing the loving hearts around her ; and her rich notes were heard again, carolling at morning and evening a very thanksgiving of melody. On this evening, as we look at her, she is training some overgrown tendrils of a climbing yellow rose among the green leaves and crimson blossoms of a passion flower ; and, as in the old time at Llansketty, singing as she works. Mrs. Llewellyn, in an easy chair close by, with her netting, looks up every now and then with loving eyes. The voice revels on with snatches of music, until it settles down to an old favourite song that had made the churchyard of Llansketty ring many a time in the happy days.

"It is a mere wild rose-bud,
Quite sallow now and dry ;
Yet there's something wondrous in it,—
Some gleams of days gone by,—
Dear sights and sounds that are to me
The finger-posts of memory,
And stir my heart's blood far below
Its short-lived waves of joy or woe.

"Lips must fade, and roses wither,
All sweet times be o'er,—
They only smile, and murmuring, '*Thither !*
Stay with us no more :
And yet ofttimes a look, a smile,
Forgotten in a kiss's while,
Years after from the dark will start,
And flash across the trembling heart.

"Earth's stablest things are shadows ;
And in the life to come,
Haply some chance-saved trifle
May tell of this old home :
As now sometimes we seem to find,
In a dark crevice of the mind,
Some relic which, long pondered o'er,
Hints faintly at a life before."

The words, which were Lowel's, had been arranged to suit an old air. She began it in a soft, low murmur ; but as her soul entered into the song, the melody breathed out into thrilling pathos, and left the mother and daughter, with moist eyes, looking out into the evening light. One star was sparkling in the sky, the first star of night,—an earnest of that future beauty that was still invisible to them.



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